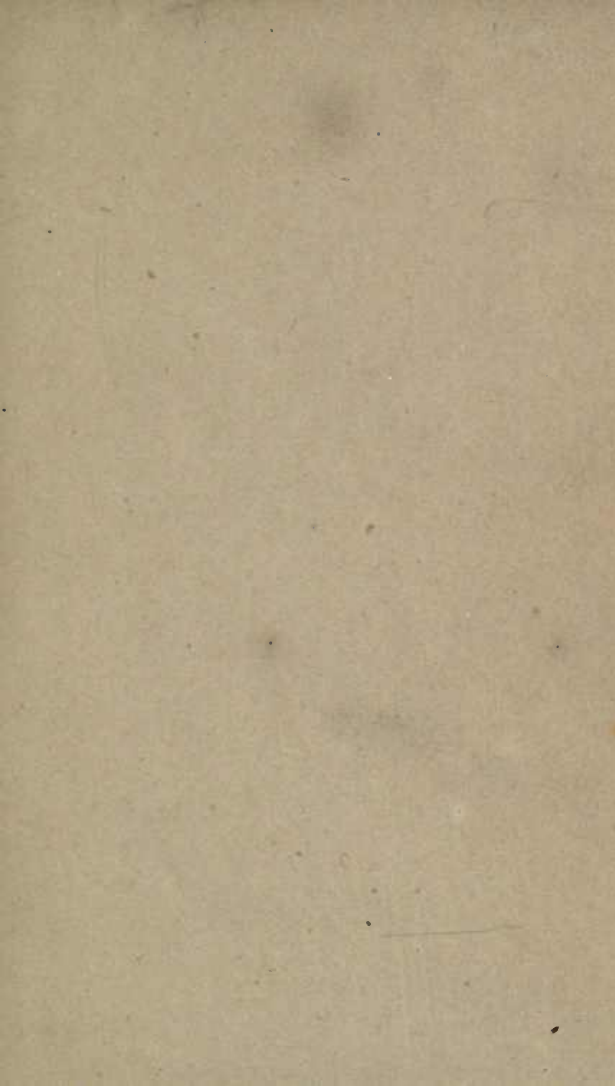


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Lucy F. Harvey
C. D.





CHLOE LANKTON;

OR,

LIGHT BEYOND THE CLOUDS.

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

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PREFACE.

THE following simple story is neither myth nor fiction, but a true, unvarnished tale, without comment or colouring. Chloe Lankton still lives and suffers in her lowly home among the hills, in the town of New Hartford, Litchfield county, Connecticut.

That the story of a life of sorrow and trial made happy and joyous by a clear and uplooking faith, and the effect of pure religion in making rich the growth of heart and soul, might be given to the world, and perhaps shed light upon the darkened path of some bewildered one, the present book was written. Upon it rests Chloe's benediction; and with it goes her blessing upon all stricken hearts, and her prayer that to such it may prove a ministering angel, pointing them upward to Him who has ever given her strength and comfort in time of sorest need.

H. G. A.

LITCHFIELD COUNTY, CT., May, 1859.

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CHLOE LANKTON;

OR,

LIGHT BEYOND THE CLOUDS.

I.

CHLOE AND BEULAH.

UPON the outskirts of one of our New England towns, in the year 18—, stood a brown house,—a small brown house,—containing only a kitchen and two bedrooms, besides a low-roofed chamber above, that had a little square window at each end. In front of the house was a level, grassy mound, with three rude stone steps down to a path that wound along by the side of the road, leading to the pleasant village beyond.

The kitchen-door opened upon the green

mound; and on a warm summer day, as it was standing open, one looking in might have seen a girl about twelve years of age sitting in an old-fashioned, straight-backed chair, busily knitting, and a little, black-eyed girl frolicking around her. A frown darkened the elder one's face as she gathered up and wound upon a ball the dishevelled yarn, and she exclaimed, "Chloe, you're never still a minute! Now sit down and be *still*! If you don't, I'll make daylight shine through you!"

In an instant Chloë was perfectly sobered, and sat down with folded hands, looking timidly and demurely up into her sister's face, thinking if she made the least move, that daylight would certainly "shine through her." It was so unusual a circumstance for her to be silent, and she sat so long and so fixedly in one position, that her mother at length, fearing the effect it might have upon her, said, "Chloe, put on your bonnet and run out and feed the chickens."

She looked up into her sister's face, doubt-

ing even then whether it would be quite safe for her to go; but, creeping stealthily around behind her chair to the table, she seized her calico sun-bonnet, and, gaining the door, gave one bound into sunshine and freedom again. She was going around to the hen-coop, when she caught sight of a little blue calico dress coming down the road. She stood still and shaded her eyes with her sun-burnt hand, in order to see more distinctly. "Oh!" she cried, "'tis Beulah!" and in a moment the chickens were all forgotten, as she bounded down the steps to meet her.

"Did your mother say you might come, Beulah?"

"Yes, and I'm going to stay a whole hour!"

"Oh, what a long while! *Won't* we have a good time? Let's go down into the orchard: it's always so nice and shady there."

So they clambered over the stone wall, and their flying feet made a path through the grass down to the apple-tree that stood close to the wall, and whose spreading branches,

now loaded with fair, nice-looking early apples, swept the green bank nearly to the road. The summer breeze lovingly lifted the hair from the two sunny brows upturned to catch the sunlight between the leaves, and wafted the fragrance of the mown hay that the workmen in the meadows near were turning with rakes or loading into carts.

"Oh, *a'n't* it nice?" said Chloe. "How sweet the hay smells! I do *love* to be out doors: don't you, Beulah?"

"Yes, I do. Don't you wish we could *live* out-doors all the time?"

"We should have to, if we didn't have any home."

"Well, we could: we could eat strawberries, you know, and sorrel; and when it rained we could go into the cider-mill."

"So we could. But where should we sleep, Beulah?"

"I don't know," sighed Beulah. "God would take care of us, I s'pose, if we didn't have any father and mother, or any home."

"Yes, if we were good children he would. Did you ever hear God speak, Beulah?"

"No: nobody ever did."

"Yes, they did. You've heard him speak, and so've I. Thunder is God's voice. Sister Nancy told me so."

"What's the lightning, then?"

"I don't know: I guess it's when he winks his eye."

"God don't wink," said Beulah. "Don't you know the man in the Sunday-school said God was a Spirit, and didn't have eyes like our's?"

"Well, I don't know what 'tis, then. Oh, there's a carriage *full* of folks! Let's hide behind the wall and see 'em pick these *splendid* apples!"

The carriage was drawn by a fine span of horses, and contained a gentleman and lady, a girl about fourteen years old, her fair face shaded by long ringlets, and a boy younger.

"What beautiful apples!" exclaimed the lady.

"Oh, father," cried the girl, "do pick us some! I am so thirsty, and they look so nice and juicy!"

"Oh, yes, father! do!" said the boy, clapping his hands and smacking his lips.

The indulgent father reined up his horses, reached out and picked off several and tossed them into his daughter's lap.

"Here, mother," said she, distributing them,—“here, Johnny,—here, father: you must have your share of this nice treat.”

But Johnny, who had made a deep bite into his apple, made a wry face, and threw it far over into the orchard.

"What's the matter, Johnny?" said the father.

"Taste and see."

"Oh, dreadful!"

"Who would have thought it?" said they, as one after another the apples went rolling on to the ground.

Then Chloe and Beulah clapped their hands and laughed loud and merrily; and the hay-

makers in the meadow near joined long and heartily, while the carriage disappeared rapidly down the road.

"Wasn't it fun to see them so fooled?" said Chloe.

"Yes," said Beulah: "only I couldn't help feeling sorry for that girl."

"So did I; but 'twas real fun, after all. There! Mother told me to feed the chickens; then you come, and I forgot all about it."

"I'd like to see the chickens," said Beulah. So they walked across the orchard, and got over the fence into the little yard where the hen-coop was. Here they stayed, feeding and admiring the tender, white chickens, until Beulah's hour was more than spent and her sister came to take her home. Chloe went with her around to the stone steps to bid her good-night. She then went into the house, and found her supper waiting for her on the round-leaved table; and soon after she crept up into the low-roofed chamber, to the sweet slumber and beautiful dreams of childhood.

Chloe's previous history is very much the same as a great many of our little New England girls. Her father was a shoemaker, and it was by the hard work of his hands that he earned the bread for his family. Her mother, too, toiled early and late; for these parents were poor,—poor in worldly goods, though rich in mutual affection for their children. She was the youngest of four girls. There had been six in all; but two of them the mourning parents had yielded to the embrace of death and seen them laid side by side in the village graveyard.

Little Chloe was always singing and happy. She liked to be running out in the sunshine; she loved the birds, the flowers, the waving trees, and all that makes the summer so beautiful; and when the autumn came she heard music in the sad-toned winds and saw beauty in the bright-coloured leaves. The white, falling snows of winter brought her a great many pleasures; but no sooner was the ice and snow all melted away than her hand

was the first to pluck the sweet wild flowers that came with the early spring. Her own glad heart was the medium which made every thing look bright: so through all the year little Chloe was singing and happy.

True, she was a heedless child, always running in and throwing down her bonnet on a chair, table, or anywhere but the proper place; then she was sure to be always playing around in some one's way, and, "Chloe, you're always losing your things!" "Chloe, you're always under foot!" greeted her every hour of the day. But these were childish faults. She had a mild temper and loving disposition, which endeared her to all and made her a pure, sweet light in the lowly home by the wayside.

II.

THE CLOUD AND THE SUN.

So the years passed over the little brown cottage by the roadside until Chloe was ten years old,—years of labour to the father, who worked at shoemaking, to the mother, who toiled early and late, and to the older sisters, who had learned, one to spin, another to weave, each thus contributing her mite to the yearly income. But they were beautiful years to Chloe and Beulah. Every day these two little girls walked to school hand in hand, sat upon the same seat and learned the same lessons. When the school was closed in the afternoon, they either stopped to play at the frog-pond, near the school-house, by the road, or strayed away over the fields and meadows. Their most favourite resort in the spring-time was a sunny hill-side, where was a miniature

“Sibyl’s Cave,”—a rock, slightly hollowed on one side, covered with moss, that was always green, and dripping with the water that poured over the rock and dashed down the hill in a little musical brook. Here they found the blue and white violets and the drooping anemones. In June they knew where to look for the crimson strawberries in the meadow; and as the summer advanced they rambled over the fields and wandered through the woods in search of blackberries and whortleberries. Chloe and Beulah were always happy together, because they loved each other so much. If either had been unkind or quarrelsome, it would have spoiled much of their happiness; but they loved each other so much that never an unkind word passed between them.

Chloe’s father was at work one day on his shoemaker’s bench, in a corner of the kitchen, and near him her mother sat with her knitting-work.

“I don’t know what ails Chloe,” said she:

"I'm afraid something is the matter with her."

"Matter with her! Why?" asked the father.

"Because she's so stupid and sleepy all the time. I have to call, and call, to get her up in time for breakfast: then she'll go to sleep, and sleep till I wake her up to go to school: then she'll start and go behind all the rest, and walk as if she could not draw one foot after another. Nancy says she gets to sleep on her seat in school-time, and the teacher has to shake her to get her up to read, and then she doesn't seem to know what she's reading about. I feel real worried about her."

"Perhaps it's her growing. I've noticed lately that she grows very fast: it's apt to make children dull, you know. 'Tisn't best to feel troubled. I guess she'll get over it: I hope she will."

"Of course, we all hope she will; and perhaps she will; but it looks to me like something more than growing. I can't bear to see her so," she continued, bending her head to

recover a dropped stitch. "You haven't seen her so much lately, because you've been to work out-doors more. To-morrow morning I want you should notice her. If she don't get better before long, I think it's best to have the doctor see her."

"To-be-sure, we will do all we can for her; but I hope she'll get over it without calling the doctor."

The family were at the breakfast-table when Chloe came down the next morning. Her father heard her slow step on the stairs, and noticed her heavy eyes and languid movements as she brushed her hair behind her ears and sat down to the table. She ate her breakfast wearily, then moved back her chair and sat down quietly with the rest while he took the old family Bible from the shelf and read one of the Psalms of David.

Having finished the chapter, he replaced the Bible, then turning, with folded hands, to the children, as he invariably did, said, "We'll be still now," and kneeled to pray. He prayed

simply but so earnestly that the tears came to the eyes of his wife, and when he rose from his knees he saw them glistening there. It moved him; and, to hide it, he put on his hat and went out. Then Chloe threw herself upon her mother's bed and went to sleep.

"Is Chloe going to school to-day?"

"Oh! is that you, Beulah?" said Rena, the oldest sister, turning at the sound of the childish voice. "Yes, she'll go, I guess. Chloe, Chloe, come! here's Beulah called for you to go to school."

As soon as Chloe was sufficiently awake, she got off the bed, and, going to the looking-glass, smoothed her hair with the worn brush that hung by a string beneath, put on her sun-bonnet, and said, "Come, Beulah: I'm ready now."

"The girls have all gone ahead," said Beulah: "let's run and catch up with them."

"I can't run, Beulah: my head feels so bad all the time! You run and catch up with them, and I will walk on alone."

"No, I will not," replied Beulah. "I had rather go along slow with you. We'll go in and get some water, and I guess you'll feel better."

It was where they stopped every day to get water, and the kind old lady that lived there always gave them a cordial welcome. She came out to the well; and as the long sweep went high up into the air and the mossy bucket down low into the cool, deep well, she said, "Which of you two girls is the oldest?"

"We're just the same age," said they, in a breath.

"You be? Why, Chloe is a great *deal* the tallest! We shall have to put a stone on your head, Chloe, to keep you from growing, till Beulah can catch up with you!"

Chloe instinctively put her hand to her head with the momentary thought that the dreadful feeling of weight there was the "stone" already weighing her down.

Chloe was more stupid than ever in school that day; and the teacher, attributing the

cause to wilfulness or indolence, lost patience and scolded her harshly, and even shook her rudely, so that she came home, her heart swelling with grief and indignation. This was the only teacher Chloe ever had whom she did not love.

That day was her last at school. The disease that had been so gradually creeping upon her increased; and in a few days more she was very ill.

"I thought," said her mother, "that there was something the matter with her. I was afraid she would be sick before she got over it."

"Well," replied the father, in his mild way, "we will make the best of it now, and do all we can for her. I will go now and get the doctor."

Meanwhile, the little spare bedroom was opened and made ready, and thither the sick child was borne and laid upon the bed. The doctor came,—a gray-haired man,—looked at her tongue, examined her pulse, and, after

asking numerous questions, prescribed suitable medicines, and left.

The news of Chloe's illness soon spread through the neighbourhood; and no sooner did good old Aunt Molly hear of it than she put on a clean checked apron and went over.

"I heard Chloe was sick," said she: "so I thought I'd come right over. Why, the dear, dear child! how dreadful sick she looks! What does the doctor say about her?"

"He says she will have to be sick a while."

"I declare! the dear child! and she always so pleasant and playing around so happy! Well," she added, taking a pinch of snuff, "I'm glad you've got your week's washing done. You'll need somebody to watch to-night?"

"No: we can take care of her to-night; but, if she should continue to be sick long, I suppose we should be obliged to call on our neighbours to watch."

By this time others had come in; and all,

with true whole-heartedness, that characterizes the people of that part of the country, kindly and freely offered themselves and their services whenever needed.

Week after week passed away, and still they watched over her,—the sorrowing and anxious parents and sisters, and the kind, sympathizing neighbours,—hopelessly; for the doctor had told them that she would die. Chloe knew what the doctor had said: she heard her father's step in the kitchen, and knew that he was walking to and fro in his great sorrow: she knew what made the sad, tearful faces that came and went by her bedside. Death seemed very near to her, and all the sin and wrong-doing of her life rose before her and rested heavily upon her heart. She saw the goodness of her heavenly Father, whom she had forgotten and disobeyed; she felt that she could make herself no better; and how could she die and meet that offended God? Her mother, bending over her, burst into tears, crying,—

"My poor, poor child, I must give you up! I always knew I loved you too well. You have been my idol; but now I must give you up!"

"Oh, mother," moaned Chloe, "I am not ready to die yet! I am so wicked!"

"Look to Jesus," replied the weeping mother, "look to Jesus. Pray to him, my poor child: he will forgive your sin, he will forgive: he is both able and willing. I can do nothing for you, but Jesus can. Oh, look to him, my poor, poor child!"

Often and earnestly did the pious parents talk to their suffering one and endeavour to point her to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.

Beulah came every day to ask after Chloe; and one morning Chloe heard her come into the kitchen, and said,—

"Mother, I would like to see Beulah: I don't want any one in here, either."

So she went in, and the two were left alone together. Beulah approached the bed, and said,—

“How do you do, Chloe?”

“Oh, Beulah, I’m very sick; and I wanted to see you, because the doctor thinks I won’t live. We have always been to school together, and I have always loved you so much. Did you love me too, Beulah?”

“Oh, yes!” said Beulah, bursting into tears.

“Now the time has come for me to die. I didn’t think ’twould be so soon when we were playing together so happy. You won’t forget me: will you, Beulah?”

“No, no!” sobbed Beulah.

“Be a good girl, Beulah, and don’t forget to pray. You must come in and see me every day as long as I live, Beulah.”

Chloe could not talk to Beulah again; for she grew worse rapidly. Her head and face were frightfully swollen: for nineteen days she could not move her tongue, and could not speak to any one, so when Beulah came in she could only look upon her earnestly and sorrowfully. She endured a great deal of suffering, and so patiently that the story of it

and her dreadful illness spread far and near, and strangers came from remote parts of the town to see the child of whom they had heard so much. As the disease increased, she lay for many hours of the day in a kind of stupor almost deathlike: at times she would open her eyes and recognise those around her, but would soon relapse into unconsciousness.

The doctor said, one day, that her hair must be cut off close to her head. Chloe had been not a little proud of her hair, for it was very beautiful and had always been the envy of her schoolmates, because it was so long, even and glossy. Aunt Molly was there when it was cut off; and as it fell in long, beautiful tresses, she got the steelyard and weighed it.

“I declare!” said she: “five ounces!”

Her mother sighed as she gathered it up and laid it away to keep. When Chloe awoke, she put her hand to her head, and in a moment comprehended what had been done.

She tried to weep; but she could not move

a muscle of her swollen face. Her mother left the room, because she could not endure the sight, while Aunt Molly tried to soothe her.

"Don't feel bad, dear," she said, "about your hair. 'Twas best to cut it off. Sick folks very often have to have their hair cut off; but it always grows again a great deal nicer than it was before."

Chloe was pacified, and in a few moments was unconscious again.

Days passed away,—days of weariness and sorrow, the dark wing of death descending, the light in the brown cottage growing dim and dimmer! The old doctor said, "It is useless for me to see her again: I can do no more for her. To all appearance, inward mortification has already commenced: if it has, it will be impossible to preserve her body any time at all, and it is very necessary that you make preparations for her burial immediately. Still, if there *should* be a change for the better, let me know."

The cloth was obtained, and the dress-maker came to make the last garment for little Chloe. The hour was approaching. The mother, alone with God, wildly prayed: the bitter, bitter cup! she could not, could not drink it! But again she prayed tearfully, and entreated forgiveness, and asked for submission and for strength of willingness to give up her child. The struggle was over: she yielded her out of her heart to God, and then the answer came,—strength for the hour and resignation to his will; and when she stood again by the bedside, a halo of peace surrounded her,—perfect rest and a sweet trust in Him who “doeth all things well.”

But Chloe did not die that day, or the next; and still she lingered, till a ray of hope cheered their hearts, and the doctor was speedily sent for.

“Well,” said he, “she is no worse; and certainly her symptoms are a little more nopeful. Strange! I never in all my practice saw any thing like it. It’s a miracle!

If she lives it will be because she is to be spared for something remarkable."

Still she lived, and lay upon the bed day after day, her weakened and half-scattered senses gradually returning to her, until she was so much better that the white robe which had been made was laid away where things seldom used were kept. Then the doctor said "she might sit up a few minutes." Aunt Molly, happening in at the right moment, wrapped her up in a blanket, took her in her arms and sat down with her before the window. How new and strange every thing seemed! The whole landscape looked wider, and the hills seemed stretching away at an endless distance. She could see the garden, and the apple-tree always called "mother's tree," because mother particularly liked the fruit it bore. They were white apples, and were now about ripe.

When she was again laid upon the bed, she was conscious of a new and strange feeling of happiness. Her mind went back to gather up

the events of her illness, and she remembered how near death had been to her, and how she had borne the burden of her own sin. Where was it now? Gone,—all gone; and in its place was a love for the Saviour, so sincere that she felt that she could bear all suffering and every other trial patiently for his sake. Then Chloe knew she was a Christian. Oh, the joy and happiness of that moment! Her mother clasped her in her arms, saying, “You’ve had a dreadful illness, Chloe; but, if it has made you a Christian, I don’t regret it!”

When they gathered around the family altar the next morning, the door of Chloe’s room was left open, and she heard her father’s voice go up in prayer, tremulous with emotion,—with thankfulness that their child, “like Isaac of old, had been restored to them, and that she had found the pearl of great price, the peace that passeth all understanding.” Often in after-years the mother said, “I gave you up once, Chloe; but I took you back again. I

am afraid I never shall be so willing again to give you up."

As soon as Chloe was strong enough, her father put her in a wheelbarrow, and she held on to the back with her thin, white hands, while he trundled her away to see Beulah. After that, the other neighbours claimed her: so she had more than one ride upon the wheelbarrow. When she was able to ramble over the fields again with Beulah, she was a changed child. There was a new gentleness in her eye, a new peace in her expressive face; for she felt the divine presence around her giving life, joy and beauty to all things.

Thus passed away the dark cloud from the little brown cottage by the roadside; but the radiance of its silver lining was left within!

III.

THE REMOVAL.

CHLOE'S father had bought the little house where they lived of Mr. Loomis, a gentleman who lived near them. He had given all the money he had, the precious savings of years,—money every coin of which he had honestly worked for; and he was glad to lay it down to buy a home for those he so dearly loved. Still, it was not enough; and Mr. Loomis took a mortgage for the rest of the amount. Then with brave hearts they set forth to cancel the debt, labouring hard and living with strict economy, looking forward to the time when they would be independent and happy in a “home of their own.” But they had met with discouragements. They lost their only cow; and, as it was a part of their dependence, another had to be procured. Steady work could

not always be obtained; and this year nothing could be paid, for all and more than all must go to meet the expenses of Chloe's illness. Mr. Loomis found himself in need of money. Squire B——, the merchant, would buy the place, and, to "accommodate," proposed an exchange. He "owned a place," he said, "over east, a few miles, that would make him a snug little home,—a house, garden and meadow,—which he could have for one hundred and thirty dollars, if he liked it." This seemed to strike the shoemaker favourably, although he did not like the idea of giving up his present home. Still, he thought it would do no harm to go and see the place; and one bright morning he started on foot, a distance of seven miles. He found another brown house, smaller, perhaps, than the one in which he was living, and, as the merchant had represented, a good garden-spot and a nice level meadow. The country round about was hilly, and the neighbours were not very near; but he had noticed, as he passed, the large, culti-

vated farms, and had come to the conclusion that they were rich farmers; and that, he thought, would be favourable for his business. He saw a district school-house close by, but learned that the "nearest meeting" was two miles distant. Here was an objection; but, then, only one hundred and thirty dollars! It would leave him but thirty dollars in debt, which he could soon pay if he was prospered; and when it was all paid he would work and get "something ahead," and then find another home "near meeting." All this he thought over while walking home, and became quite well satisfied with the proposed change. He gave a favourable report to his wife and daughters, and soon after the bargain was completed and arrangements made for their removal the ensuing spring.

There was general regret throughout the neighbourhood when it was made known; for the shoemaker and his family were beloved by all, and they themselves dreaded the thought of leaving. The mother could hardly be re-

conciled to the change. She loved the place where they had lived. Every thing around it was dear to her. The white rose-bush which her own hands had planted and trained over the window, her fruit-trees, her currant-bushes and thrifty garden,—each had some association connected with it. Then she had become attached to the neighbours; and their kindness and sympathy during the trying time of her child's illness had made them doubly dear. "It was like breaking her heart," she said, "to go; but, as it seemed for the best, she would try to be reconciled."

The eighteenth of April was the day fixed for their departure. On the seventeenth it snowed all day and all night, and in the morning the prospect was dreary enough,—roads and fields one unbroken sheet of snow: so their goods had to be loaded upon sleds instead of carts. Mr. Loomis drove the family in a long lumber box-sleigh, and the father led the cow behind. They could not keep back the tears when they went out of the empty

house, and they flowed afresh when their friends and neighbours came to the doors and windows to wave regretful farewells as they passed. Chloe was glad that they did not pass the house where Beulah lived. These two little girls had had their parting all to themselves days before. Beulah's father was very soon to take his family away to Ohio, and they did not expect to meet again in a long, long time,—if ever; and Chloe felt that the sight of Beulah's face again would cause her to sob aloud.

They drove on slowly until they had gone away from every thing that looked familiar. The roads were hilly and rough, and in some places the snow was badly drifted. Suddenly shouts were heard from the forward team. One of the loads had turned over into the snow. The men all ran to the rescue; and it seemed a long time before they came back, with red faces and benumbed fingers, to drive quietly on again.

At length they passed a red house at the

foot of a hill; they could see the smoke issuing from the chimney of a house upon the summit; and midway between the two was another house, at which the first loaded team had stopped. That was their new home. But how dreary it looked as they drove up,—that low, brown house, with the cold, white snow drifted around it! The men made a path with their feet and brushed the snow from before the door, and they went in. Oh, how poor and cold looked that humble room! The mother looked around, passed on into the bedroom, stood before the window and wept. The children did not follow her, but wrapped their cloaks closer around them and remained in the kitchen to see the unloading. Chloe went to the window and looked out. The only cheerful thing in sight was the smoke still issuing from the chimney upon the top of the hill. The old-fashioned house itself stood out in bold relief against the surrounding snow and the dim, white horizon beyond. She noticed the roof, quaintly sloping down over a piazza,

the slender posts of which she could plainly see, and the poplar-trees in front; and she wondered what kind of people they were that lived within. Then her thoughts for the moment wandered away, and there passed over her a vague desire for something more than she yet had known. It was a new and strange sensation, something she could not grasp,—a longing, undefined and mysterious, for something better than she yet had even dreamed of. She was aroused by her father's voice, saying, "Where's your mother?" He had come in to ask some question about the goods.

"She's in the bedroom," was the answer. He went to the door: she was still weeping. He hesitated, but he would not disturb her, and the children heard his deep sigh as he turned away. The place did not look so desirable to him as on the pleasant morning when he had first seen it.

But the arranging of the household goods diverted their minds; and when the cooking-stove was put up, the clock placed in the cor-

ner, and a shelf fixed for the family Bible, the room seemed comfortable and homelike.

In a few days the snow melted away, the days became bright and sunny, and spring birds were heard in the trees around. The father planted his garden, while the mother made beds and sowed in them the flower-seeds that she had brought from the old place. And after all, their new home was in a pleasant spot, with its broad and green meadow-views, and dim, whispering wood, and, overlooking all, the old-fashioned house upon the hill, around which the road curved and was lost to sight.

I think that whoever built that quaint old piazzaed house there possessed a love for the beautiful; for on either side a glorious landscape meets the eye. There are tree-covered hills, dark with their own shadows; beyond, other hills sloping down into shaded valleys, and still other hills rising upon hills, dreamy and indistinct in the distance, but radiant with sunlight, like the misty future towards which

Chloe's young heart was looking. And then the gorgeous sunsets that for so many long years have blessed the old house standing there,—tree-crowned hill and lowly valley bathed alike in the baptism of golden light and shade!

All this, and more, Chloe saw every night when her little bare feet climbed the hill to go to the pasture after the cow; and as the gold of the sunset was lost in the gray of the twilight, and the cow with its tinkling bell came slowly home around the curved road upon the summit of the hill, and the sounds of evening floated dreamily up, her heart unconsciously drank in the pensive beauty of the hour. Sweetly and silently Nature's influences blended with her child-thoughts, opened a new world of feeling, and helped to form and shape her after-character.

17.

THEIR NEW HOME.

THE children enjoyed the new place. There was a pleasant novelty in going to a strange school-house, finding new playmates and exploring unfamiliar woods. Chloe's little friends were delighted to guide her to their favourite haunts,—sometimes to a grassy nook deep in the shady wood, or perhaps to a bubbling spring under the spreading old tree, or to the sunny side of some far-looking hill, where the summer winds blew and the white clouds drifted far above their heads.

Then Chloe would tell them stories of her old home, and of dear little Beulah: how they always went to school together, sat upon the same seat and learned the same lessons; what baskets “heaping full” of blackberries and whortleberries they used to get; and how they

made a play-house under the apple-tree by the orchard-wall,—that great old apple-tree, with its branches reaching over almost to the road; and the air would ring with childish laughter as she told about the apples that looked so beautiful, but tasted so that “nobody couldn’t eat ’em, anyway,” and how she and Beulah would clap their hands and laugh at the travellers who, riding by, dusty and tired, often stopped to pick them, but would very soon be making all sorts of wry faces and exclamations.

Then she told them how very, very sick she had been, and how her hair had to be cut off close to her head, which made it so short now; how the doctor said that she could not live; how full of grief her mother was at the thought of losing her, and how her grave-clothes, which she never wore, had been made for her; and sometimes she would lead them to her home, and they would follow her softly into the little bedroom, and a shadow would pass over their bright young faces as she raised the cover of

the red box and they looked upon the white robe, so smoothly folded, lying within.

Sometimes, too, she talked to them about Jesus Christ; for Chloe had not forgotten that she was a Christian. Every day, she, with Rachel, the second sister, went away up-stairs to pray alone together. It would have been a pleasant scene for one to look in upon,—that low, unfinished chamber, the girl Rachel kneeling there, and the child Chloe by her side, her hands clasped and her young head bowed in prayer. I have thought that, if ever angels stoop to listen, it is when the simple prayer goes up to heaven from the trusting heart of childhood.

They had been in their new home several weeks before Chloe, on account of the unsettled state of the roads, could go to meeting. When at last she did go, it was with her father and sisters Rachel and Nancy. It was one of those clear, serene Sabbath mornings which, as has been said, “come nowhere so perfectly as in old Connecticut;” the trees were putting

forth their green leaves and the birds were making their nests among them, and Chloe thought that the earth never before looked so beautiful. They crossed a brook on the way, and the ripple of its waters sounded to her like the sweetest music. She was so happy that she felt as if she could almost fly over the ground; and the walk was so delightful that it seemed but a short time until they came to the maple-trees, under whose shade the girls stopped and put on their white stockings and morocco shoes, which they had brought with them, and hid their "every-day ones," that they had worn to walk in, under the fence, until they came back. Then they walked on to the church.

It was a large, unpainted building, with no steeple, and no pillars in front, and Chloe thought, did not look at all like a meeting-house.

"Why, father," said she, "that a meeting-house? It don't look like one."

"Well," he replied, "it's a meeting-house,—

an old-fashioned one,—built a great many years ago.”

There was no porch in front; and, as they went in, Chloe saw the gallery-stairs on each side, and a broad aisle extending through the centre of the house. The people were mostly strangers to them, except the few that came from their own neighbourhood. A man who knew them led them up the aisle and seated them in a large, square pew with seats all around it. The inside of the church was very old-fashioned, and looked very strange to Chloe, who wanted to gaze around; but the sides of the pew were so high that she could not see much: so she sat down very demurely, and listened to the sermon as attentively as she could. She told her mother and Rena about it when she got home, and said she had enjoyed the day very much.

Meanwhile, the mother tried to feel contented. The woman who lived in the nearest house had made them a visit: she was kind and pleasant; and others whom she had met

seemed very cordial. But when the twilight hour came, and the milking was done, and she sat in her straight-backed rocking-chair before the door, her thoughts would go back to the same hour at the old place, when Aunt Molly and other friends, with their checked aprons and snuff-boxes, were accustomed to "run in" for a quiet country gossip. But she tried to keep back her regretful feelings, for she saw that her husband was becoming quite contented. His garden was growing thriftily, and orders for work began to come in from the farmers around; and before the summer was gone he had made up the thirty dollars which he owed for his place. He could not rest then until he had paid it to Squire B——. So one pleasant morning he put on his Sunday suit, and, with the money safely stowed away in his pocket, started on foot to go back to his old home.

It was late in the afternoon when he returned, and he looked heated and tired from

his long walk. He sat down, took off his shoes, and said,—

“Well, the place is our’s now. I’ve paid the squire all off.”

“Did you see our old house?” was the first question.

“Yes: I went down into that neighbourhood on purpose. It looks pleasant there: I don’t think I ever saw the fruit-trees hang so full as they do now.”

“Who lives there?”

“I don’t know. I asked no questions I didn’t want to.”

“Oh, father,” said Chloe, “did you see Beulah?”

“No: Beulah has gone away a great many miles out West. I saw Aunt Molly,” he continued, speaking to his wife, “and Miss Durand. They wanted to know how we got along here,—how you liked it, and how the girls did,—and said they would give a good deal to see you again.”

“Oh, father,” said Chloe, “did you look to

see if our play-house was there, that we made by the wall, under the apple-tree?"

"No; I didn't think any thing about it. It looked pleasant there," he continued; "but, after all, if this place was only near the meeting-house, I should like it about as well. Anyway, it's our own, and we are out of debt. I feel now as if we might lay up something for our old age."

"Well," replied his wife, "I hope the Lord will prosper us, let us live where we will."

She sighed as she spoke; for it was her great source of regret to live where she could not attend a place of worship every Sabbath. She could not walk the two miles to the church, and could only go when her husband found an opportunity for her to ride, —which was seldom. Neither could Rena go very often; and for that reason the kind father was very anxious to find another home for them. He had noticed, during his Sunday-morning walks to church, a house that he liked very much. It was only a quarter of a mile

from the meeting-house,—a cozy little place, with a pleasant yard before it. He learned that it was for sale, and he hoped that he might be able to get it. But when he heard the price—nine hundred dollars—he instantly relinquished the idea, for he knew that it was more than he could pay. After that, he heard of other pleasant little homesteads for sale, but with each there was something to prevent his buying; and, as time passed away, they began to be attached to the place where they lived. At length they were contented, and felt it was to be their home, and all thought of going elsewhere was given up.

The next year after their removal, Chloe's father built an addition to the house,—a room for a kitchen and a small pantry. He did the work himself, for he was naturally ingenious and had a taste for "carpenter work." The next year, when Chloe was thirteen years old, he added a tiny bedroom to the new kitchen. While her father was at work, she amused

herself by running around upon the beams of the foundation which he had laid.

"Father," said she, "may I not have this for my room?"

"I don't know," said he: "we'll see."

Did there come to her then a foreshadowing of her after-life, as it was to be, in that little room?

V.

CLOUDS AGAIN.

LIKE a beautiful dream, another year of Chloe's life passed away. Nancy and she had learned every winding walk through the deep old wood and knew every grassy path across the fields and over the hill-sides. To use her own words, they were "happy as queens, going nutting and berrying, and in the evening hearing father tell stories about his own childhood,"—all the while these golden moments passing away so fleetly, never to return. Nancy was only two years older than Chloe; and they loved each other with a love that only sisters can know. She was now about sixteen, and, in accordance with the school laws of the State, the coming winter was to be the last that she would spend with Chloe in the little school-house at the foot of the hill. She

had taken a severe cold, and her parents noticed that as the cold wore away the cough remained; but she "felt well," she said, and she "meant to go through with that arithmetic this winter, and finish that sampler."

So she went to school with Chloe, and between school-hours she worked with her needle, and spent part of the long evenings with her slate, pencil and arithmetic. Still the cough remained; and her mother said,—

"It will not do for you, Nancy, with that cough, to be out in the snow so much."

So she ceased attending school,—for a few days, as she thought,—and her arithmetic was closed, with the pencil inside, until she could go again. But the cough grew worse, until they were alarmed and sent for the physician. He prepared medicine for her, and came to see her occasionally, but did not speak encouragingly of her recovery. So the winter passed away, the school was closed, and Nancy had not "been through" her arithmetic, as she had hoped.

The parents were talking one day, and the mother said,—

“I don’t see as the doctor is doing Nancy any good. Her cough isn’t a bit better than it was in the winter; and she’s certainly growing weaker.”

“I know it,” replied the father; “and I have been thinking that I wished the doctor in B———— could see her: I believe he would help her, if any one could. I might take her down there, I suppose. I could carry her right to her uncle’s, you know, and the doctor could come in there and see her.”

“Yes,” replied his wife, “that’s a good plan: she will like to visit uncle’s folks, and the ride, perhaps, will do her good.”

So he hired a horse of one of the neighbouring farmers, and when they started early in the morning her mother went out to the wagon to see that she was nicely wrapped up, and to fold a blanket around her feet. She was very anxious all day, and, as evening approached, her anxiety increased.

"Why don't your father come?" she said to the girls. "Nancy ought not to be out so late as this!"

Just then the sound of wheels was heard, and she went out to meet them.

"Why, father!" she exclaimed, "where's Nancy?"

"I had to leave her," was the reply: "the doctor wouldn't do any thing for her unless I did. He said he couldn't tell any thing about her by seeing her once. I shouldn't have stayed so late if she'd been coming with me."

"How long is she going to stay?" asked the mother.

"Two or three weeks."

"Well," she replied, "uncle's folks will take good care of her, and perhaps it's for the best."

At the end of two weeks he hired the horse again, and himself and wife went down after Nancy. They returned in the afternoon of the next day, and Chloe was the first to spring to the door to meet her sister. Could that

pale, thin girl, walking so wearily up the path, be Nancy? She hardly spoke as she came in, but immediately sat down in her mother's rocking-chair; and then they heard her hollow cough and saw how changed she was. Their mother came in, looking very sad, and went into the bedroom to take off her things. Their father had gone to take the horse home; but he soon came in, and tears were in his eyes as he sat down to take off his shoes.

"Are you very tired, Nancy?" he said.

"Yes, sir," she replied: "I am some tired."

There was very little said. Words were not needed to tell the sad truth. Nancy was sent early to bed, and then Rena said,—

"You found Nancy worse, mother?"

"Yes," she replied, trying to command her voice; "the doctor said he couldn't do any thing for her. I'm 'most sorry that we let her go down there at all."

Chloe was almost awed by the strange sadness and stillness. She felt the cloud resting upon her humble home, and she went to her

bed to weep. But Nancy was brighter in the morning, and all, though sad, were calm and even cheerful. The days were becoming warm and spring-like, and they hoped that the mild weather would benefit her. Nancy told her sisters the pleasant things of her visit, and, as they became accustomed to her weak state, she began to tell what the doctor had said and done.

“One day,” said she, “he brought in another doctor to see me. I sat there, working on my sampler. I had just begun the house; and he said, ‘Making a meeting-house? What do *you* want of a meeting-house?’ I said, ‘It isn’t a meeting-house: it’s a house! I shall want a house to live in.’ Then he said, ‘Well, you won’t want one long.’ I thought to myself that I might live longer than he, after all.”

The spring came on, with its new and beautiful life of green leaves and singing-birds; but Chloe felt not its beauty. She went, as was her wont, down into the meadows, after the

ripe strawberries, but she wept because she must go alone. Then she picked the largest and ripest of the berries, and placed them on the top for Nancy, who would meet her at the door to see how many she had found, and to ask which way she went, whether over the hill or through the woods, and if she stopped at the spring to drink, as they always did when they went together. When autumn came, and the trees were clothed in their rainbow hues, Chloe put on her thick shoes and wrapped her shawl about her to go to the woods for chestnuts. She knew that Nancy could not meet her then at the door when she came home with her laden basket, and she sat down under the old trees and wept and wept again. The sound of the wind in the topmost branches was to her like dying sighs; the bare limbs were bony arms, and the dry and falling leaves around her said, death, death, death! The first great sorrow of her life was coming, and her youthful heart shrank from the meeting.

Nancy's seventeenth birthday came. She

wanted to "sit up," she said, "and celebrate it." Then she called for her paper, and with trembling fingers added the closing lines to a letter that she had for many days been writing for her mother to keep after she was dead. It was her seventeenth birthday, she wrote, and when the eighteenth one came she should not be here. She never sat up again; but she lingered yet a little longer, and the ground was white with the snow, and the winter winds whistled through naked trees, before she died. One day, when Mr. Yale, their minister, came to see them, he said to Nancy,—

"My dear young friend, do you not feel as if you were going to a better home?"

"I think I love Jesus," said she, with an effort, "but sometimes I'm afraid that I am deceived. Oh," said she, taking his hand, "I want you to preach my funeral sermon, and warn my young friends not to do as I have done, but prepare for death. Oh, tell them to prepare for death!"

She had been failing all the day, and as

night came on it was evident that her end was near. Chloe was sent to bed with Rena, whose health had become quite delicate. She awoke in the night and heard the clock below strike two. Soon a light shone through the chamber, and the form of their mother appeared.

"Girls," said she, "we think Nancy is dying."

They both arose and groped their way down the stairs, and as they entered the room, they saw their father and Rachel standing over the bed where Nancy lay, with gasping breath, and the dreadful death-look already in her eyes.

"Father! oh, father!" said the dying voice.

He bent over her, raised his head, and said, "She's gone!"

Her mother came and stood in his place, and she and Rachel closed her eyes and straightened her limbs in death. Then Chloe came forward and looked upon her. She had never

seen death before, and she almost felt the closing of the dark wings around her!

All the next day she wandered about the house like one in a dream. When the evening came, she lighted the candles and sat down by the stove. The door was open into the room where her dead sister lay. There was no light there: it was the room that was the kitchen when they came there to live. Her father was walking to and fro through the two rooms. She watched him as he disappeared in the darkness, and heard him stay his footsteps by the dead form of his child and then turn and come again in the light.

"Father," said she, "please sit down here, won't you?"

He sat down, and she laid her head upon his knee and sobbed out there her great sorrow.

On the Sabbath there was a funeral. It was a pleasant morning, and a procession of leighs slowly and solemnly wended its way over the hills to the old church. Though in mid-winter, the day was calm and quiet, and

after the services the coffin was carried into the open air, and many gathered around it.

She was pleasant to look upon. The long lashes swept her marble cheek, and the black of her eyes was visible through the thin, transparent lids.

The burying-ground was near, and, as they stood around the grave, the minister, with a heart full of sympathy, spoke words of holy consolation to gladden the hearts of the mourners. Then they saw the coffin lowered, a little earth thrown in, and turned back to their desolate home.

Chloe felt her loss more, even, than she had thought, and for many days she wept almost constantly. But, though the dark cloud hung over them, its mission was to bring only a passing shadow; for above, the sun of heaven was shining in full glory, and, lifting up their eyes and hearts, they could bless both the shadow and the sun.

VI.

THEY VISIT FAMILIAR SCENES.

THE next Sabbath Chloe and her father walked to meeting. No new snow had fallen since the last Sabbath,—the day of the funeral. They could even see the place where the bier which bore the coffin had stood, and the foot-prints of those who had gathered around it. They looked towards the graveyard as they came near. The new grave was there,—a dark mound in the gleaming snow. A lonely grave it seemed; for all the others were buried under the white drifts.

At noon they walked over there and stood together by the side of the new, fresh grave,—Nancy's grave! How sad and strange the thought, and how desolate-hearted they were, both father and child! The wind came moaning over the hill, and moved the branches of a

dry tree that stood near them. Chloe remembered the lonely hour in the chestnut-woods. The shadow came over her again, and, cold and shivering, she clung closer to her father. He was standing with compressed lips and tightly-folded hands; for he had loved his child Nancy more than he could tell.

A moment more of silence, and then they turned away. Although no words had been spoken, each felt nearer to the other than before. The hearts of the father and child had held holy communion by the side of that grave in the snow.

When they reached home that night they saw Rena's pale face watching for them through the window. Rachel was preparing the supper, and their mother was reading the Bible in her rocking-chair. She read the last verse of the chapter aloud. It was the last verse of the twenty-seventh Psalm. She read, in slow, tremulous tones, "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." Then

she closed the Bible, and they gathered around the supper-table.

That night, when they were retiring, Chloe said,—

“Rachel, what is the meaning of that text that mother read out loud?”

“I don’t remember now what it was,” said Rachel.

“I do,” replied Chloe: “I can say it. ‘Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.’ What does it mean to ‘wait on the Lord’?”

“I don’t know as I can tell you,” said Rachel. “Perhaps it’s obeying God’s commands. ‘He shall strengthen thine heart.’ I know my heart has been stronger after I have done something that I know God will approve,—especially if I have to deny myself to do it.”

“What have you ever done, Rachel?”

“Oh, nothing to tell of: still, it was a good deal to me. I think every Christian has

duties to do, and if they don't do them it is a great hinderance."

"What are the duties, Rachel?"

"Oh, I can't tell you: every one wouldn't have the same, of course. I suppose the first duty is to join the church. I wasn't but thirteen years old when I joined. 'Twas before you can remember: you were only four years old. Rena and several others about my age joined at the same time, and the minister talked to us children, and told us how easy it would be for us to be led astray, and that we must be very careful and not bring a reproach upon the cause. After that I was so afraid I should do something, that I watched myself all the time; and sometimes I would forget, and then I would feel so bad. But I know better now. Why, there are little trials coming up every day; and if I bear them patiently I feel as if I was doing something for God. I never had any great trial till Nancy died. It seemed for a while that I couldn't have it so; but all that day before she died, I never was so calm

and happy. It seemed as if every thing was in God's hands and he would do just right. I ——Why, what is the matter, Chloe? what are you crying for?"

"Because I'm so wicked, Rachel."

"Wicked? What do you mean, Chloe?"

"Why, I've never done any thing for Jesus Christ. It didn't seem right to have Nancy die. Every thing seems so strange! It's so strange to live, Rachel!"

This outburst was beyond Rachel's simple wisdom; and she could only say,—

"You must pray to God to help you, Chloe."

Chloe did pray. She knew not what else to do, and she found a sweet peace in praying. Jesus Christ was very dear to her; and for days she moved about in a kind of calm rest that, though there was sadness in it, was sweet to her soul.

Chloe's nature was sunshiny. She easily threw off sadness or sorrow. The family settled back again into their old ways; and when

the summer came again, it brought back the old lightness to her heart. But there was a deeper feeling of joy in the dark old woods and on the sunny hills. She was older, and thought and felt more. Although these hills and woods had been all her little world, yet there, in the stillness of her hill-side home, a truer and better life was gradually opening to her.

One day her father came in and said,—

“Who wants to go over to the ‘old place’ to-morrow?”

“Why, who’s going there?” asked all together.

“I’ve just heard,” he replied, “that the conference meets there; and I thought some of us would go over.”

After some talk, it was decided that Rachel should stay with Rena, and that “father, mother and Chloe” should go. Chloe had not visited her old home since they left it, and she was in an ecstasy of delight. She could hardly sleep that night for thinking of the morrow.

She awoke very early in the morning, jumped up and ran to the window.

"Chloe," cried Rachel, "what are you up there in the cold for?"

"Cold!" echoed Chloe: "I wonder what you are made of, to call it cold! It's daylight, Rachel: won't you get up?"

"Why, no," said Rachel: "you wouldn't start any earlier for getting up at this time of night."

It seemed a long time to wait; but the hour came at last. Breakfast was over, and her father drove up in the long green wagon that he had obtained for them to ride in. The road led them over hills through the forest. The woods resounded with the singing of birds, and every thing was so fresh and beautiful in that summer morning! But they soon came out of the shade, and drove by plains and meadows, on a level road. Then Chloe began to recognise familiar things. There was the lot where the strawberries grew, and here was where she used sometimes to come after the

cow. They drove rapidly on. "Oh, father," Chloe cried, "there's the old well-sweep!" It was the house where she and Beulah always stopped for water on their way to school. It had not changed any. The same curtains were at the windows, and the mossy curb and sweep looked just the same. Then came the school-house and the little frog-pond by the roadside. Her father slackened the speed of the horse, and Chloe gazed upon the dear old places as they rode slowly by. How familiar, and yet how strange, every thing seemed! Next came the minister's house. "It seems," said Chloe, "as if Mr. Mills would come out of that door and say, 'My daughters,' just as he used to, to us girls."

"Poor old man!" said her mother: "he's dead now!"

They drove up to the church. The people standing around the steps stared a moment, and then came smiles of recognition and shaking of hands with the father and mother. Chloe had quite grown out of their remembrance.

“Mother,” she whispered, “I’m going over to Mrs. Bissell’s a minute.”

She ran across the yard up to the well-known door. The old lady looked at her through her spectacles as she came in. At length she said,—

“Why, Chloe, is it you? How you have grown! How did you come?”

“With father and mother. We came over to the meeting.”

“Oh, then they’ve come over? I shall be very glad to see your mother. You’ve lost a sister lately,” she added, glancing at Chloe’s black dress: “Rachel, wasn’t it?”

“No, ma’am: it was Nancy.”

“Oh! was it Nancy? What was the matter with her?”

“Consumption,” replied Chloe.

“Oh, then, she died with consumption? Indeed! can it be,” she continued, “that young, lively girl is dead? She used to come in here, sometimes, Sunday noons. I remember how her black eyes used to shine.”

When Chloe went back to the meeting-house, she found some of her school-mates waiting for her on the steps. It was pleasant to meet them again and see how each one had grown and changed. She was glad, too, to hear about those who were not there. One or two had died, and others had moved away. They pointed out the new minister to her. He was a young man, and not at all like old Mr. Mills.

The inside of the church looked very natural and homelike. Several ministers were present, and the one who had been chosen to preach spoke of the duties of Christians. It was a pointed discourse. His whole soul was in it, and the truth went home to every heart. Chloe felt that every word of the sermon was for her. When he addressed those who professed religion but neglected to join the Christian Church, she hung her head in very guilt. She felt more than ever convinced of her one great duty, and she breathed a silent prayer to Heaven for guidance and direction.

VII.

DUTY DONE.

THE minister closed his remarks, and others that were present followed. They were mostly young preachers. Their hearts were full of reverence and feeling; and many an eye was dimmed with tears as with power and fullness of meaning the words fell from their lips. Their strong faith seemed to draw down the very clouds of heaven. Peace and hope, trust in God and love to man came like manna upon the souls of the congregation. The meeting was closed by the singing of "Old Hundred." The congregation arose and sang with the choir, and the simple country church was filled with the sweet and solemn harmony. Then the oldest minister present pronounced the benediction, and reluctantly,

it seemed, the concourse of people moved slowly out.

The shadows were deepening in the valleys when they rode home that night. The parents had left the church with spirits gladdened and refreshed, and they found much pleasure in talking over the events of the day. But Chloe's ride was a sad one. She passed the school-house, the old well-sweep and the familiar plains and meadows in silence. The living words of the young preacher were uppermost in her mind. He had made her see the importance of uniting with a Christian Church in a light in which she never before had seen it. It was a duty that she felt she must perform; but, when she looked back upon her past life, her mind shrank from it. She remembered how light and gay she had often been with her young school-mates; and the fear arose in her mind that she was not a fit subject of so solemn and responsible a relation.

The shades of evening were in the forest

as they drove through. Chloe was grateful for the darkness. It suited her state of mind, and she could have gone on hours longer beneath those sombre shadows. But they reached home at last. Rachel met them at the door, and Rena's pale face brightened as they entered. There was much to hear and much to tell about old friends and old places. A man—one of the neighbours—came in to talk with her father about the meeting: so Chloe's unusual quietness was not noticed. Said he,—

“Isn't that the church where Rev. Samuel Mills used to preach?”

“Yes,” was the reply: “he preached there when we lived there.”

“A pretty smart man, wasn't he?”

“Yes: he was a good man and a sound preacher. But he was funny sometimes. You've heard the story about him and the students, haven't you?”

“No,” was the reply: “I don't know as I have.”

"He was riding through Litchfield one day, and some young fellows that went to school there were going along in the street, and they met Mr. Mills and thought they'd have some fun with him. So they came along and said, 'We've just heard some news that'll be bad for you, Father Mills!'

" 'Ah!' said he: 'what is it?'

" 'Why, the devil's dead.'

"He raised up both hands and said, 'Poor, fatherless children! What *will* become of you?' The students couldn't say a word. It got out after a while; and I guess they didn't hear the last of it very soon."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed their visitor: "that's first-rate; the best joke I ever heard! Ha, ha, ha!" he laughed again. His hilarity was catching, and, though they had all heard the story so many times before, they could not help joining. At length he added, "Didn't this Mr. Mills have a son that was a missionary?"

"Yes," was the reply: "his son's name was

Samuel. He went to Africa, but didn't live but seven months from the time he left this country. He died on board ship and was buried in the ocean. When the news came of his death, his father stopped and said, 'I don't understand it. I thought the Lord had a work for Samuel to do on the earth; but he has taken him away; and I don't understand it.' It affected him a good deal. They had a sermon preached in the meeting-house, and they read some of his letters that he wrote to his father on the voyage."

"They must have been interesting," remarked the visitor. "I think I have heard them spoken of more than once before." Just then the long clock in the corner struck nine. "I declare!" he added, "I must go." Then, taking his hat, he bade them "good-night" and went out.

When Chloe went to bed that night, she unburdened her mind to Rachel. She told her all she could remember of the sermon, and of her own feelings in regard to joining

the church. "Why don't you join?" said Rachel. "I think you ought to. I think it's your duty."

"I know it is," said Chloe; "but I'm afraid, Rachel."

"Afraid of what?"

"Why, I'm afraid I a'n't fit. You know how I'm always talking and laughing; and I always say something I'm sorry about."

"Well," replied Rachel, "you always did laugh, and I expect you always will, whether you join the church or not. If your *heart* is right, that's the main thing, you know. If you really *feel* it your duty to join the church, you'd better not put it off. You'll never feel right till you do it."

After much prayer and many doubts, Chloe's wishes, by the advice of all her friends, were made known to Mr. Yale, their minister. To their surprise, they found that others had expressed the same. Several came forward, and when the appointed Sabbath arrived

there were twelve that stood up in the broad aisle of the old church, to make a public profession of their faith in Jesus Christ. Chloe was the youngest of the twelve.

When the service was concluded by which she was united to the visible Church of Christ, she felt almost ready to sink with a sense of the responsibility that she had taken upon herself. Then they gathered together, and a solemn silence rested upon all as the clergyman broke the bread and poured the wine, and, in tones of deep feeling, welcomed to the "Lord's table the new guests who had never sat there before." Chloe's mind was filled with a peace she never before had known. The place was solemn and holy. Jesus Christ seemed present with them; and over all was resting the sweet stillness of the dim old church.

When Chloe walked home that night, every thing about her seemed changed. Often as she had looked upon the beautiful landscape

of hill and valley that stretched away on either side, that evening it possessed a new beauty. She did not know that the change was in herself. She had not yet learned that the soul sees in the face of nature the image of its own loveliness or deformity. In every object that met her eye she felt a new and strange delight. The noise of the brook over its pebbly bed was sweeter music to her ear than murmuring waters had ever breathed before; and her soul flowed out in gratitude to the Great Giver of all life and beauty.

Rena could not help noticing Chloe's face as she entered; and her eyes followed her young sister with joy and love. Chloe was now in the fresh bloom of youthful loveliness. The long tresses of her beautiful dark hair were wound about her head, and her face was always sunny with happiness and her black eyes dancing with joy. But there was a new light in them to-night,—a gleam that told of deeper feeling; and it was a more subdued

happiness that shone through her expressive face. They all looked upon her more lovingly and tenderly. They felt that she was now, more than ever before, the pure, sweet light of their humble home.

VIII.

RENA'S DEATH.

"OH, there's a peddler!" said Chloe, one day. His coming was a pleasant variety in their every-day life; and she hastened to open the door. He was a tall, thin man, with very small, blue eyes, and had two tin trunks suspended from his shoulders.

"Buy any thing to-day?" he said,—“pins, needles, thread, tape, buttons, thimbles, handkerchiefs, soap, combs, 'spenders——”

"That'll do," said Chloe, laughing: "please walk in."

He made a low bow to Rena as he entered, and then sat down and laid back the covers of his trunks with a flourish. Rachel left her spinning, and Rena moved up nearer in the rocking-chair.

"Let me look at your silver thimbles," said she, feebly. "What is the price?" (fitting one to her finger.)

"Fifty cents," was the reply.

"Try it on, Chloe," said Rena. "Why, it fits you better than it does me!"

"Is fifty cents your lowest price?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am, the lowest,—unless sometimes I sell 'em by the quantity."

"Suppose we should take two?" queried Rachel.

"Well," said he, hesitating, "if you'll take two—I do' know——Well, I guess if you'll take two you can have 'em for forty-two cents apiece."

Rachel found one that fitted, and then went to get the money.

"Bring my purse, Rachel," said Rena.

She brought it, and Rena took from it a bright half-dollar. It was a part of what remained of her treasured earnings in days of health.

After the peddler had gone, Rena sat a long

time gazing at the thimble upon her finger. At length she said,—

“Chloe, I bought this silver thimble for you. I sha’n’t live to use it. I got it for you to remember me by.”

Chloe suddenly raised her head and looked at her sister. Rena had been fading so gradually, and had been so cheerful, day by day, that it had not occurred to her that she would die. But, as she looked upon her again, the truth at once flashed upon her. Rena would die: she saw it in the hollow eyes and sunken cheek. She turned and stood at the window. It was then in mid-winter. The air was dim with new-falling snow, and already the sloping roof of the piazzaed house on the hill was whitened with it. The meadow was cold and drear, and the bare limbs of the trees in the forest beyond looked gaunt and strange through the misty air. The shadow came over her again,—the same deep shadow that she had felt under the chestnut-trees and by Nancy’s grave.

"Death! death!" she said to herself: "oh, how can I meet it again?"

Then Rena spoke. "Chloe," said she, "come here." With quivering lip Chloe obeyed. "I don't want you to feel bad, Chloe," she said: "it's what I've known a long time; and I have prayed over it a great deal. You know how many doubts I used to have about myself, whether I was a Christian or not. They're all gone now. I feel willing to die: I *want* to go and be with Jesus. All I pray for now is for patience to wait until the time comes. I want you all to feel reconciled to it. If you only realized how happy I am, I'm sure you would."

Chloe could only answer by her sobs. But the ice was broken now, and after this Rena talked much of her own death.

"Mother," said she, one day, "I wish you would take the rest of the money in my purse and send down to the village and get me some cloth."

"Cloth! For what, Rena?"

"I want to make my own shroud."

"Why, Rena! How can I get it?"

"Don't refuse me, mother," she said: "you know I can't live. I feel myself growing weaker—it seems as if I could—every day; and I want to make it. It will be a pleasure to me."

Rena's urgent request could not be denied. The cloth was obtained for her, and one day she laid it upon the table and her own hands cut and fitted the last garment that she would wear upon earth. Then she put on the new thimble and sewed till she was tired. But the winds of March were moaning around their lowly home before it was finished, and she was moved into the room where Nancy had died. She sat up a little while every day, and with the shining thimble worked upon the white robe.

"Don't go out," she said to Chloe one day, who entered the room and suddenly drew back, "because you see me at work on this. Why, I've been just as happy as if I was making a dress! It's about done now," she added,

with a little sigh. "Won't you call Rachel, Chloe?"

Rachel came, and Rena said, "You may get me the box and other things now." Rachel knew the box she wanted, and silently obeyed. Then they all stood by her and watched her thin, white hands as she carefully folded the spotless garment and placed it smoothly in the box.

"There!" said she: "they'll lie there safe till they are wanted. It won't be long. Here, Chloe, the thimble is your's now. I never shall need it again: my work is done. Keep it to remember me by. What makes you cry? I never was so happy in my life as I am now." After this, each day found Rena weaker, while her faith in Christ grew brighter and stronger. "Don't pray that I may live," she said, "but that I may have patience to wait." So, patiently waiting her summons, she stayed her time, looking up through the golden-rimmed cloud to heaven.

Chloe came in one day and found her father

lying nearly senseless on the bed, and her mother standing over him, wildly weeping.

"What is it?" she exclaimed. "What is the matter?"

"Why," replied her mother, "he lifted too heavy, and he is dreadfully hurt! I've sent for the doctor: why *don't* he come? Rena dying in one room and he in another! Oh, it's too much,—too much!"

That day was a dark one. All through its long hours Chloe walked the house in agony. To lose Rena was a great trial: still, she had schooled her heart to it and could give her up cheerfully now. But to see her father die was a sorrow she thought that she could not bear. And she was not called upon to bear it. Through the skill of the physician, his life was saved, although he lay many days in weakness and suffering.

Meanwhile, Rena was rapidly failing. She only wished to live, she said, to look once more upon her father; and they were all very glad and thankful when he was able, once

morning, to walk with help into Rena's room. He sat down by her bed, and she held his hand between her own and looked into his face long and earnestly. The next day he could stay with her longer, and the next he spent nearly all the time in her room; for they all felt that Rena had not long to live.

"Mother," said she, "do you think me in a dying state?"

"No, Rena: I do not think you are."

"When I am, won't you tell me?"

"Yes, Rena; I will."

Her father was sitting by her bedside when it came. He called his wife, and she called the girls.

"Rena," said her mother, "we think you are to die soon."

She raised her hands feebly and said, "Oh, how I do rejoice! I shall soon be with Christ."

"Rena," said her mother again, "now you are dying, do you feel any dread of death?"

"Oh, no: I've no more fear than if I was going to sleep. Don't feel so bad, mother,

when I am so happy. I never did rejoice so much. It seems as if I could see Jesus on the cross, bleeding for my sins. Don't mourn so for me: try all to live faithful and meet me in heaven."

Rena never spoke to them again. Her mother bent over her, and, in her slow, tremulous tones, said, "Rena, my poor child, does your faith hold out?" She could not speak, but she looked up and smiled an assent; and then her head dropped. Chloe saw that her lips and her hands were changing their colour. She turned and left the room. She went to the kitchen-window and looked out upon the beautiful spring morning. She stood there, almost unconsciously, watching the play of the sunlight among the fresh green leaves and listening to the songs of the birds. Her father opened the door and said, "Chloe, Rena's gone! She's done breathing."

IX.

A FUNERAL AND A JOURNEY.

ONLY one of their neighbours was with them when Rena breathed her last; and she could not perform the sad offices for the dead. Rachel and her mother closed her eyes, and others soon came in, with hands ready and willing, and hearts full of sympathy for the mourners. The mother brought out the box, which had not been opened since Rena arranged it. Her tears flowed afresh when she raised the cover.

"Here," said she, "every thing is all ready. Poor Rena fixed it with her own hands."

"Sure enough," said one, taking the box from her: "why, this doesn't seem like death!"

Saturday night came. The preparations

were made for the funeral the next day. All through the last of the afternoon and first of the evening their friends and neighbours had been coming and going. The mourners sitting quietly in the kitchen could hear their whispered remarks as they passed through into the other room and looked upon the dead form.

"Do you think she looks natural?"

"Yes; quite so."

"She's very much emaciated."

"Yes; but the expression is very pleasant."

"They say she died very happy."

"Yes, I suppose she did."

Later in the evening the house became quiet, and then Rachel and Chloe went into the room and closed the door after them. Rachel laid back the covering from the face, and, with clasped hands, they stood together and looked upon their sister.

"There were six of us once, Chloe," said Rachel: "now we two are all that's left."

“Yes,” said Chloe, “but I would be willing to die if I could feel as happy as she did.”

“She was a real Christian,” said Rachel.

“Oh, how good she was!” cried Chloe, weeping. “My dear, dear sister, I never shall see you again!”

“She’s better off now,” replied Rachel, wiping the tears from her eyes.

“I know she is. I prayed to-day, Rachel,—and I never prayed so much in earnest in my life,—that God would make me pure before I died.”

“Oh, Chloe, you don’t know what you asked for. You know the Bible says, ‘Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.’”

“Yes, but I’d be willing to be chastened if I could be as good as she was.”

The Sabbath appointed for the funeral was the first day of summer, and at an early hour kind friends were there. The body of Rena was placed in the coffin, and her mother’s tears fell upon the marble cheek. Said one to her,—

“Your daughter died very happy.”

"Oh, yes, very happy. When Rachel and I were closing her eyes, it seemed all the time as if she was inviting us to go with her to the world of glory."

"Then," said another, "why do you cry so? Don't mourn so for her: she's better off than she ever could be with you."

"Oh, I know she's better off. I know she's happy now. God has the best right to her. I am perfectly resigned. But how can I do without her? She was such a good child to me, I can't but mourn."

The room was soon filled. A prayer was offered, a hymn was sung, and then the procession was formed and slowly wound its way over the hills to the old church. The morning was very beautiful. The birds sung, the summer wind breathed its balmy breath, the skies above were soft, deep and pure, and the sun shone with brightness and splendour. Rachel said to Chloe,—

"Nancy was buried on Sunday; but the ground was covered with snow then."

“Yes,” replied Chloe, “I remember. There wasn’t a green thing to be seen ; and now how pleasant it is !”

The coffin was carried into the middle aisle of the church, where Nancy’s had stood a little more than a year before. Mr. Yale, their beloved minister, preached the sermon, bringing from the treasury of the Holy Scriptures priceless gems of wisdom and truth to gladden the hearts of the mourners. After the services, the coffin was taken out and placed upon the green turf, and many gathered around to look for the last time upon her whom all had loved. Then it was borne to the grave that had been made by the side of Nancy’s, and there, in the midst of sunshine and springing life, Rena was buried out of their sight.

For months afterwards, a shadow filled her accustomed place in the household. They missed her pleasant smile and gentle, patient ways. But by degrees the old cheerfulness returned. They did not mourn without hope. To her, death had seemed only a step from the

earthly valley into a world of light, and when they thought of Rena, it was not as lying in the cold grave, but as one among the glorified spirits in heaven.

In the month of August after Rena's death, Chloe went with her father and Rachel to visit their cousins. The visit had for a long time been anticipated and talked about, and Chloe had looked forward to it with much pleasure. Their father had promised to take them through the places where he lived when a boy. He had often told his children a great many stories about his boyhood and the places connected with it, and Chloe liked to hear them now as well as she did when a child. It was a day's journey there, and the long green wagon was obtained again for them to ride in. The road wound through beautiful forests, across rich, level plains and over sunny, far-looking hills. Chloe was in high spirits. Every beautiful thing of the landscape caught her eye. She talked every moment, asking her

father questions about this and that, until Rachel said,—

“Chloe, you talk so much I’m tired of hearing you!”

Her father seemed as happy as she was. Every thing around was to him full of old associations. His heart was warmed with youthful memories, and with almost youthful animation he pointed out familiar objects and related incidents connected with them. Said he, “We’re now almost to Johnny-Cake Town.”

“Johnny-Cake Town!” echoed Chloe: “why, father, what made them call it so?”

“Why,” he replied, “they used to raise a great deal of rye there: it was all their dependence; and one year it was all cut off. They didn’t know what they should do; but they had their corn ground and lived on that. All the people used to have johnny-cakes for every meal; and it has been called Johnny-Cake Town ever since.”

After a few more mile-stones had been

passed, "There!" said her father, pointing with the whip,—“there’s where we lived when I was a boy.” It was a beautiful green lawn, with large apple-trees growing upon it. The house was not there: only the cellar and part of the old chimney remained.

“Oh, father,” said Chloe, “I wish the house was here. How I should like to go in and see all the old rooms!”

“You can see how large the house was,” he replied. “The potatoes used to be kept in this corner of the cellar, and the apples in that; and the bread-box used to stand about in the middle. I remember one fast-day—your grandfather and grandmother were very strict about keeping fast—we all had to get up at four o’clock in the morning and eat a breakfast of pudding and milk. Then we had to ride four miles to meeting, and we couldn’t have any thing more to eat until after sundown. Brother Thomas used to be always full of his tricks; and he hadn’t any notion of going all day without

any thing to eat. Mother had made some of her big doughnuts the day before, and Thomas said he knew where they were. So he slipped down cellar and got some out of the bread-box, and found his way out by the gangway. I went out of the kitchen-door and met him, and then we went away down into the lot and ate them."

"Didn't they ever know it?" asked Chloe.

"Not till we were grown up; and then we, told of it. We children used to pick up apples together under these trees," he continued, musingly,—“Thomas and Arba, I and Ruth. Now father and mother are dead, and Thomas is away off in York State. He was a roguish boy, always full of his tricks. I wish I could see Thomas again!”

Neither Chloe nor Rachel replied. Their father's sadness was sacred to him and to the old place, and they drove away, silently pondering the olden memories in their hearts.

X.

THE FATHER'S VISIT AND THE NEW BELL.

THE visit to the old place had made the father's heart grow young again. As he sat upon his shoemaker's bench in a corner of the kitchen, his thoughts would go back to the days of his youth, and for hours he would seem to live again in the past. Thomas, the fun-loving, bright-eyed boy, was associated with all. Years had passed since the brothers last met, and a strong desire arose in his heart to behold him again. One afternoon in October, two strangers knocked at the door. They were from the place where Thomas lived. Business calling them into the northwestern part of Connecticut, he had requested them to go to his brother's home and persuade him to return with them. They would call for him

early the next morning, they said, if he would be ready.

Chloe's father had so long cherished the thought of seeing Thomas again, that this seemed a providential opportunity; and he told them he would go. His wife immediately began to make preparations for his early start. As he watched her movements, a feeling of regret came over him. Thomas lived almost two hundred miles away, and it seemed a very long journey. He had never been away from his family before, and he knew not what might occur during his absence. He saw tears standing in the eyes of his wife, and then he was sorry that he had consented to go. But she brushed them away, and said,—

“’Twas such a good chance, she wouldn't have him miss it for any thing.”

Then she gave an extra touch to his clean collar and black stock. He did not see any more tears that night.

They were all up early the next morning, and when the gentlemen came he was ready.

Rachel, Chloe and the mother followed him out on the door-step. When he went through the gate, he turned and gave them a sorrowful look, and they heard him heave a deep sigh. Then his wife burst into tears. Chloe wept too, and went to a window to watch him as they went down the road. They stopped before they reached the foot of the hill, and one of the men came back to get the umbrella that had been forgotten.

"What!" said he,— "crying because your husband is going away? I go off to be gone weeks at a time, and my wife doesn't mind it."

He ran back to the wagon, and Chloe watched her father's form until he was out of sight.

They were sad all day. The bench in the corner was empty, and the house had never seemed so lonely. He was to be absent three weeks; and Chloe thought they never would end. But the time passed away, and a fortnight had gone before they were aware. They were sitting around the fire in the even-

ing, Rachel, Chloe and their mother. They could hear the moaning of the autumn wind without, as it whirled the dry leaves past the door.

"The wind blows like a storm," said the mother: "I wish your father was at home!"

"Only a week more," replied Chloe, "and then he'll come."

"If he only gets back safe!" sighed the mother: "that's all I think of. They were going on the boat; and I'm so afraid something will happen!"

The night was dreary, and they retired early. Chloe had not been asleep, when she heard the sound of a footstep in the road. She raised her head to listen. Ah! she knew that step! It was coming through the gate. She jumped up, threw on her clothes, rushed almost headlong down the stairs, and in a moment more was in her father's arms.

"Oh, father," said she, "I'm so glad you've come!"

Very soon Rachel and her mother were up.

They hastened to light the candle, that they might look once more upon his face. Then the fire was speedily rekindled, and supper spread for the loved father. They gathered around as he ate, and asked him questions about his journey and his visit. The journey was very pleasant, he said: they went part of the way by steamboat. Thomas had grown old some, but he was Thomas yet. He lived in a nice place, and the girls were all at home. Cousin Sylvia was about Chloe's age, and wanted to see her cousin very much. The girls had sent her and Rachel some pieces of their dresses. He had come back alone, he said, with no accident, and he thought it had done him good to see something of the world.

"Well," replied his wife, "you've had a good visit and come back safe; and I'm sure we ought to be thankful."

It was late when they went again to their beds, and Chloe could not sleep for joy that her father had safely returned. The next day there was a great deal to hear and to tell, and

every day for weeks afterwards the father recalled some incident of his journey and visit. Chloe was never weary of hearing. His glowing accounts gave her glimpses of the great world of which she as yet knew nothing, and there passed over her a strong desire for something more and better than she yet had known. With it came the vague yearning she had often felt, amounting almost to pain. She did not understand what that nameless longing was. She had not yet learned how the soul sometimes struggles for its growth. She did not know how a natural capacity for knowing and doing is often crushed that only needed cultivation to spring up into active life.

But the remembrances of the father's journey were lost in a more interesting topic. The old-fashioned meeting-house was to be torn down and a new one built in its place. It was to be a handsome building, with a steeple and a bell. Every one was engaged about it. The people who lived in the handsome houses near the church were no more so than those in the

mossy-roofed cottages among the hills. The members of the church, both rich and poor, seemed bound together in one common cause; and Chloe's whole heart was in it. Still, she loved the old church. She had become attached to its large, square pews and its high, old-fashioned pulpit. Its very quaintness was dear to her, and it was full of vivid associations. Under its sacred roof the sweetest peace she ever knew first entered her soul. There, too, she had tasted sorrow and shed bitter tears over the lifeless forms of Nancy and Rena. When the old meeting-house fell, Chloe could not keep back the tears. But the work went on rapidly, and the new church was completed. It was considered a handsome edifice, and they were all very proud of it. The bell must be obtained, and then the church was to be dedicated.

One day Rachel and Chloe made a visit to one of their neighbours. They remained until evening and walked home in the bright moonlight.

"How pleasant it is!" remarked Rachel.

"Oh, it's splendid!" Chloe exclaimed. "I do think it's such a beautiful world, Rachel!"

"There's trouble enough in it."

"I know it. When Nancy died I thought I should never smile again,—*never*. Then when Rena died, I didn't feel as if any thing would ever seem pleasant again; and yet it does,—as pleasant as it used to, almost. Sometimes, when I get to thinking, I wonder if I shall be as happy as I am now, always."

"You may have trouble; but the grace of God could make you happy then."

"I don't know, Rachel. I can't bear to think of having any more trouble. I——Oh, hark! hark!"

"What do you hear?" said Rachel.

"It's our new bell ringing! Oh, it is! It is! Don't you hear it, Rachel? Do hark!"

Rachel stopped to listen. She too could plainly hear the silvery tones as they fell upon the distant air. Yes, it must be the new bell. Still the two stood and listened. There was something strangely sweet in the sound of that

far-off chiming, as it floated over the hills and blended with the soul of beauty that filled the night.

"Oh, Rachel! A'n't it beautiful?" said Chloe. "Oh, I'm so glad!"

"I wonder if father and mother hear it?" said Rachel.

"I don't know," was the reply. "Oh, yes, there they are, out on the step!" she added, as they came near.

"Do you hear the new bell, girls?" asked the mother.

"Hear it?" answered Rachel: "I guess we do!"

Then the four stopped upon the steps and listened, until the cold air drove them in.

Chloe and her father went to the door again. The new bell was still ringing, and the soft moonlight was upon the hill, meadow and forest.

"How long they ring it!" cried Rachel from within. "I guess they're having a gay time over there!"

When Chloe fell asleep that night, the moon-beams were lying upon the chamber-floor, and still that far-off, solitary chiming was floating over the hills.

XI.

THE RIDE TO HARTFORD.

CHLOE had an uncle who lived in Hartford. He was her father's brother Arba, and her father was anxious to see him after he had visited Thomas. But the autumn was his harvest-time. His hands were full of work, and he thought he would not go then. He would wait, at least, until the new church was dedicated. But the winter came on severely, and the visit was postponed until spring. Then rainy weather and unsettled roads made travelling unpleasant: so the sweet beauty of the summer came upon the fields and meadows before he was ready to go. His wife and Chloe were going with him. The young lady who was teaching the summer school would stay with Rachel during their absence.

Chloe had often read of cities. There were

pictures of them, too, in her geography. But beyond this she knew nothing; and this visit would be an era in her life. Still, she did not prepare for it with all her usual enthusiasm. The new life of the summer had not so fully wakened the same in her. It was not because she was not happy. She had every thing, she thought, to make her so. There were many sweet, youthful joys folded down deep in her heart, and through all the day long she was joyous and happy, yet underneath all was a sadness whose meaning she did not know.

Still, she enjoyed the ride to Hartford very much. The road led them through pleasant villages and then toiled over Talcott Mountain. There it was very beautiful. Chloe had never gazed upon a landscape like the one spread out on either side. Then the wildness of the scenery all around delighted her. She saw, in the field by the roadside, the wonderful rock, rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Then they came to the other rock, on the opposite side, close to the road. She almost held her breath

as they passed; for it looked just ready to fall upon them.

"Folks think," said the father, "that the rock lying over there in the lot used to be a part of this one."

"Why, father," said Chloe, "how could it be?"

"They say 'twould just fit on; and they think it was thrown over there by an earthquake or something."

"Well, it might be," said the mother.

"Oh, yes," he replied: "likely 'twas an earthquake or something of the sort; or perhaps it never belonged on there at all. I don't suppose anybody knows."

Chloe did not speak, it seemed so wonderful a thing. She caught sight of a deep and dark-looking gorge on the right-hand side of the road. It was spanned by a little bridge; and she could hear the surging of the waters from out the mystery of shadow that reposed below. Just beyond, but farther from the road, was a house. It was a quaint-looking building, with

a roof nearly flat, and had various strangely-shaped windows.

"What a strange house!" she exclaimed.

"An Englishman built that house, and lives there, I believe," replied her father.

"I wonder how it looks inside?" continued Chloe. "I wish I could go into it."

"There, Chloe," said her father,—“there’s the road that goes to ‘Wadsworth Tower.’”

"The one we can just see from the hill before we get to our house?"

"Yes," he replied, "the same one."

"Look, Chloe," said he, at length, pointing with his whip,—“there’s Hartford. You can see it now.”

Chloe looked, and saw the tall spires glittering in the distance. She could also see some nice residences with beautiful grounds around them. When they entered the city, she gazed around with wondering eyes. The bustling streets and showy windows both bewildered and delighted her. Uncle Arba lived just beyond the city limits, in a red house with a

meadow in front. He was glad to see them, and gave his brother a cordial greeting. He left his work during the two days they stayed, to show them the wonders of the city. Chloe was pleased with every thing she saw, and her uncle's honest face beamed with pleasure at her exclamations of delight. Her father gave her some money, with which she bought some little things for herself and Rachel.

She was very tired when they arrived at home. It was two or three weeks before she recovered from the fatigue of the journey to Hartford. The next Sabbath she could not walk to church as she had done, and through all the summer she was weak and drooping. She was beginning to learn the cause of the strange sadness. Such weakness was a new thing to her; and she tried to throw it off. Why should it be when life was just opening to her so wondrously? Her heart would overflow with happiness, were it not that her strength and buoyancy were gone. As it was, she was sad, though gentle and patient.

In the fall she was better, and the old animation returned.

"There!" she exclaimed, one day, as she sat busily sewing, "this dress is done! I can wear it to school all winter. I'm so glad I can go this winter. I want to learn all I can; for if I should go away to learn the tailor's trade in the spring, I don't suppose I shall ever go any more."

"Do you want to learn the tailor's trade?" asked Rachel.

"Why, yes; I want to do something, and I suppose it might as well be that as any thing. You know I shall want things by-and-by; and I don't want father to spend all he earns for me."

"I hope you won't have to go away to learn," said Rachel: "I don't want any more partings."

"Why, Rachel, it won't be like dying!"

"I know it," replied Rachel, sadly; "but dying isn't the worst trouble in the world."

"Rachel is low-spirited to-day," thought Chloe, as she went to put away the dress.

The first Sabbath in December was bitterly cold.

"Why, girls," said the mother, as she saw the preparations, "you won't think of going out this cold day?"

"I want to go, mother," said Chloe: "it seems as if I *must* go."

"If Chloe can go," said Rachel, "I can."

"Well," said the careful mother, "you must wear thick shawls over your cloaks; and then I'm afraid you'll freeze before you get there."

They started, but it was bitterly cold. The piercing wind seemed to reach their very vitals. They heard the bell ring very clearly long before they saw the top of the church-spire. But very few people were present. It needed courage to face that biting air.

When they left the warm church to go home, it seemed colder than ever. The sky was overcast with gloomy clouds, and the sharp wind almost took away their breath.

Chloe turned to shield her face. Her eye rested upon the pallid stones of the graveyard near. There the forms of Nancy and Rena were sleeping the dreamless sleep. She could see both the graves very plainly. How cold, bare and drear they looked!

The olden memories came rushing over her, and for a moment she thought she could not turn away and leave them there! But the winter's breath must be faced, and, after a long, cold walk, they reached their home. That night Chloe dreamed that she was out again in the piercing wind and saw again her sisters' graves cold and bare upon the bleak and wintry hill.

Before another Sabbath came, Chloe was so ill that the physician was sent for.

She was sick five weeks, although during the latter part of the time she sat up a part of each day.

"I feel a great deal better," she said to Rachel, one bright morning: "I'm going down to take breakfast with you."

She did so, and then helped Rachel in doing the house-work.

"Chloe," said her mother, "don't do too much. I don't want you to get sick again."

"Oh, no," she replied: "I'm not a bit tired. It seems so good to be around the house again!"

But when night came she was very, very tired, and said she would go right to bed. Just then, steps were heard on the frozen path, and voices on the door-step. The door opened, and two bright faces peeped in. They were Chloe's young friends, and she hastened to greet them.

"How do you do, Chloe?" said they: "you've been sick, haven't you?"

"Yes; but I've felt better to-day. Sit down and take off your things."

They complied, and Rachel placed the stand in front of the stove with a lighted candle upon it. They all gathered around it, and each one took out her knittirg-work. The father moved his bench nearer the stove, and

the room looked bright and pleasant. Chloe took her knitting-work, and made a great effort to seem cheerful. She tried to chat as gayly as any of them, and neither her mother nor Rachel suspected how very ill she felt. As soon as they were gone, she retired to rest.

It was late when she came down the next morning. Her father was already at his work. He noticed her changed face as she sank upon a chair, and he hastily got off the bench and looked at her over his spectacles. She stretched both hands towards him, but, before she fell, he caught her in his arms and laid her upon the bed in the tiny bedroom which he had built himself. She did not rise from it for three weeks.

XII.

SADNESS.

FIVE long months passed away while Chloe was confined to the house. The white snows melted, and the gentle spring came again, before she went outside the door. Never, perhaps, had spring been to her so beautiful as after that winter of illness. Every invalid knows how the heart sighs and pines for Nature's sweet awakening. For weeks she eagerly watched its coming, and every day she sat at the window to look over where the wild flowers grew and wonder if they were in blossom yet. Rachel went out, one sunny day, to look for some. She brought back a handful of blue and white violets and drooping anemones. How precious they were to Chloe! She arranged them herself, and placed them on the stand where she could see them

as she lay upon the bed. To her they were full of mystic whisperings of hope and light beyond the present.

Not long after that she went into the yard. She walked a little farther every day, until she could go into the garden where her father was planting. At last she was able to walk as far as the red school-house at the foot of the hill. There was a meeting there every Thursday evening, and she attended several times. About this time her father had a little business that would take him over to the town where they used to live.

"Why can't Chloe go?" said the mother.

"She can," was the reply, "if she's able."

Chloe said she wanted to go very much. When they started, Rachel and her mother were watching them from the window.

"Chloe looks more like herself to-day," said Rachel.

"Yes," replied the mother: "she'll enjoy going over there and seeing the old school-

house again. I hope she'll come back quite bright."

It was late in the afternoon when they returned, and Chloe was so tired that she immediately went upon the bed in the little bedroom. Her mother went in and found her weeping. She came out and said, "What's Chloe crying for? Didn't she stand her ride very well?"

"No," replied the father; "she didn't—very well. When we got to the school-house she was clear overcome. There were some children playing around and jumping across that little pond there. She said she used to be as happy as they, and now a good many of her mates were dead and her health was all gone. I tried to comfort her, and told her a great many had been worse than she and got well. But she was so tired out that I had her go into Mrs. Bissel's and lie down; and when we came home she said it seemed as if she could not bear to go by the school-house again: so I

took another road home. I'm afraid it'll make her worse."

"Poor child!" sighed the mother: "I thought she'd enjoy it so much. If she was only as well as she used to be!"

Chloe did not soon recover from that ride. She was sitting, on one of the September mornings, in her mother's rocking-chair, before the window. It was warm, and the window was open: she was leaning her cheek upon her hand and listening to the sounds without. A slight wind gently rustled the leaves; birds were singing, and she could hear the noise of katydids from the woods across the meadow. Her father came in and said to his wife,—

"I can get a horse to-day; and hadn't you better go to the store with the butter?"

"Why, I don't know," she replied: "there's a good deal to do to-day."

"I can do it all," said Rachel.

"I would go, mother," spoke Chloe: "it's such a pleasant day to ride."

"I don't believe but that you can ride as

far as Mrs. A——'s, Chloe," said Rachel. "She said the other day she did wish you would. Father will drive slow."

"Oh, yes!" said he: "'twon't hurt her to ride over there."

Chloe said she would go. Mrs. A—— saw them coming, and met her at the door.

"Why, Chloe," said she, "how glad I am to see you here once more!"

"Can you keep her till we come back?" asked her father.

"Oh, certainly: she can lie down here just as well as she can at home. I am very glad she could come."

"Don't you get any better?" she asked, after Chloe was comfortably fixed on the bed.

"I haven't been as well since that day I went with father. I hope I shall be better this winter."

"I hope so. I guess you will. You must hope for the best."

"Oh, yes," said Chloe: "if it wasn't for hope the heart would break."

Mrs. A——'s cheerfulness did Chloe good. She returned home encouraged, and was brighter and more cheerful the rest of the day. But when the cold autumn winds began to blow, Chloe was worse. She did not walk a step for eight months. The next summer she could walk a little around the house, and also the next winter; and when another spring came she could walk a few steps outside the door.

One day in April a cousin came to see them. The next morning, as he was going away, he said, "Come, Chloe; I've got my horse harnessed, and I want you to go and take a ride with me."

"I would like to ride with you if I could," she replied.

"Why," said he, "you can sit up some and walk around the house. I don't think it would hurt you to ride a little way. Come! you've got to go. I know it will do you good."

"Well," she replied, reluctantly, "I'll try to go; but I know I am not able."

Rachel got her cloak and bonnet, but as she went out at the door she found she could not walk alone. Her cousin led her to the gate, and then lifted her into the wagon and guided the horse down the hill towards the school-house.

"What a good air there is to-day!" he exclaimed. "Now, isn't this better than being shut up in the house?"

Chloe tried to smile an assent; but it was a ghastly smile. She was in an agony of pain. He noticed her distressed face, and in alarm immediately turned back to the house. Rachel ran out to the gate, and helped him to bring her in and place her on the bed. Then Chloe wept. Her whole frame shook with deep sobbing. For many days after, she lay upon the bed in suffering and sorrow. She paid too dearly, she thought, for so short a ride. But after a time she was better, and could sit up again and walk around her room.

The fourth of July came. In the quiet of their hill-side home they could occasionally catch the floating sounds of bells and notes of

rejoicing from the nearest villages. Chloe caught a little of the inspiration, and the next day she walked to the dinner-table and ate with the family. It was a warm day; the door and windows were open, and it was very pleasant without. Chloe wished to look out once more upon the beautiful summer. She wondered if she could walk to the door. "I will try," she thought. But the effort was too great. Rachel sprang to catch her; and again she was carried to the bed, and again she wept more bitterly than before.

The doctor came a few days after. She had been under his care a long time, and he was disappointed that she had grown no better. Said he, "Chloe, I believe you are proof. I have given you the most powerful remedies that are known to the medical faculty, and I see no effect at all. I can think of nothing more that I can do." So he left; and soon after another was sent for. He spoke more encouragingly, and Chloe became hopeful. She

would do any thing for the sake of being well again

"Mother," said she one morning, "that medicine is all gone that the doctor thinks will do me so much good."

"I know it," was the reply. "Your father is going to get some more for you."

"I'm sorry," she replied, "because he will have to walk."

It was three miles to the village; but for love of his child the father walked them patiently. In the afternoon the doctor came and ordered another kind. Chloe saw her father silently preparing to go again. She wept to think of the twelve weary miles he must tread for her. He looked upon her sorrowfully and tenderly; but said nothing. When he returned, he sat down by the side of the bed and said, "Chloe, you seemed to feel very bad because I had to go to-day. I'm just as willing to do it for you as for myself. Don't ever feel so again."

"I couldn't bear to have you get so tired," she said, "and you've had to spend some of that money that you've worked so hard to lay up."

"Well," he replied, "if I had not laid it up a dollar a time, I could not get things for you now that you need."

XIII.

RACHEL'S DEPARTURE.

NEARLY another year had gone, and one day in the spring, Rachel sat down with her sewing in Chloe's room.

"What did the doctor say to you?" she asked, listlessly.

"I will tell you what he said," she replied. "He said I had 'boxed the compass,' and that I had taken every thing, without being any better. He had done all he could, and should not come any more."

There was silence in the little bedroom for a few moments. Rachel did not reply. She only sat with her eyes fixed upon her work, quickly and nervously plying her needle, while Chloe was looking at her wonderingly, as if she expected there was something to be told. It came at last.

"It's all settled, Chloe: I've decided to marry him."

"You have?" said Chloe, faintly.

She was trying to smother the quick pain that shot through her heart at Rachel's words.

"Yes," continued Rachel, with more animation: "I've thought it all over, and it seems to be the best thing I can do. I shall hate dreadfully to go away; but when I look ahead it seems for the best."

"When will it be?" asked Chloe.

"I don't know exactly:—before many weeks, I guess."

She was still looking down upon her work, and her hand was still plying the needle. She raised her eyes for the first time at the sound of Chloe's weeping.

"Why, Chloe!" she exclaimed.

"Oh, Rachel!" sobbed Chloe: "how can I let you go?"

"I haven't gone yet," she replied, cheerily: "so don't feel so!"

"Well, you're going. I shouldn't care half so much about it, if I was well."

"I know you would not; neither should I feel so badly about going away to leave you, if you was only well, as you was once. But I don't want you to feel like this," she added, soberly. "Nobody knows what a trial 'twill be for me to go. If I only thought of that, I could not go; but when I look ahead, it seems best. There! Now you've stopped crying, you look much better!"

"Don't you remember, Rachel," said Chloe, "once, when I was talking about going away to learn the tailor's trade, you said you didn't 'want any more partings'? I didn't think, then, that you would be the first one to go."

"We can't always tell what's before us," remarked Rachel. "But! we won't talk about it any more," she added, as she saw Chloe just ready to weep again.

In a few weeks Rachel was married. She remained at home a fortnight afterwards, and in the mean time preparations were made for

her final departure. Every thing that she was to take away was gathered together and packed. The mother picked up every thing she could spare from her household stock of tin and earthen articles.

“Put this in somewhere, Rachel,” she would say, “when you get to housekeeping: you’ll find that nothing comes amiss.”

How fast the time fled! Very quickly Rachel’s fortnight sped to its close, and the day came when she was to go. Chloe, lying upon the bed, listened to the final preparations. The last thing was packed, covers were shut and locks fastened. The wagon that was to take them away drove up to the gate, and Rachel’s father and husband were putting in the things. Then Rachel came into the little bedroom. She was all dressed to go, and Chloe thought she looked very pretty in her new bonnet and dress. The sad parting over, her mother followed her out, leaving the door open behind her. Chloe heard a few tearful words uttered, the wagon drove away, and the

three were left alone. How lonely the house was! For days, a profound stillness seemed to reign within and without. The father moved around in his usual quiet way, the mother was silent, and Chloe sad and uncomplaining.

So the months passed over them. Day by day Chloe lay upon the bed, looking out longingly upon the fields and meadows, with the prayer going up out of her heart to God that, if it was his holy will, she might be restored to health.

"Chloe," said her mother one day, "the doctor from C—— has just gone by; and if he comes back this way I'm going to call him in."

"Well," replied Chloe. They anxiously watched his return, and the father went out to the gate to hail him. He suddenly stopped his horse, and very willingly alighted.

"I've heard of your daughter's illness," Chloe heard him say, "and I have thought that I should like to see her."

He sat down by her bedside and talked encouragingly. He thought she required very different treatment from what had been pursued. The system needed strengthening. He had a remedy that he wished her to try faithfully. He would leave full directions, and would call again in a few days to see how she was.

"Do you think you can cure her?" asked the mother, as he was going out.

"I am confident that I can help her a great deal," was the reply.

Chloe's hopes were raised to the mountaintops. She should be well again! Oh, how joyous the thought! It would be a happy hour when she should go again through the fields and meadows. She knew where she would go first. It would be right to the flat rock by the spring; and once more she would lave her brow in that pure and sparkling water, and the birds in the wood close by would sing loud and sweet, as they used to do when she and Nancy were children together. There were so many places, too, she should

have to visit. She should fix over her nice black crape dress and her red French calico, and then she would go to see Rachel. So she read the directions for the new medicine over and over again, so as to make no mistake, and tried every day to think she was better.

The doctor was very anxious about Chloe. She had been given up by two physicians, and to cure her would be a lasting memorial of his skill. So he plied her with medicine. When one remedy failed, he obtained an other, and Chloe took each with renewed courage and hope. Her every faculty was centred in the strong hope of being well. Her mother was encouraged, and her father willingly spent his hard-earned money and walked weary miles patiently and uncomplainingly. But at length the doctor was forced to acknowledge that all had been of no avail. He was disappointed and mortified.

"There is one thing more," he said to Chloe. "I have feared for some time that you would have to undergo a surgical operation before

you are cured. I have given you every remedy I could think of, hoping it would not have to be done, because I did not wish to inflict unnecessary pain upon you; but now I am forced to believe that you cannot be helped without it."

"Would it cure me?" she asked.

"I think it would."

"Tell me all about it," she said.

He told her candidly of the suffering she would have to endure, but depicted in glowing colours her speedy recovery from pain and disease. Then he left her to "think of it." She did think of it. It was terrible to think of, and her whole being shrank from the ordeal of suffering. She thought of it days, and thought of it nights, until her reason was wellnigh gone. Her mother tried to comfort her.

"Chloe," said she, "you have a hope in Christ: trust in him now. Oh, my poor child, I wish I could bear it for you!"

The dreaded hour drew near. When the

doctor came, he found Chloe with her eyes wildly rolling, and trembling in every nerve. He gave her a composing draught, and then told her how much depended upon her own calmness; and if she could be well again she never would regret a few moments' pain. "If she could be well again!" Those words thrilled to her inmost heart. Hope and courage came again, and for the moment she was strong. How she missed Rachel then! She longed for that strong arm and calm, quiet presence; for her mother was walking the kitchen and wringing her hands.

"Oh," she moaned, "why was my child spared for this? Was mother ever called to see a child suffer so much?"

When Chloe was writhing in agony, she thought, even then, how her mother was suffering. She would not add to it by screams and piercing shrieks, but her lips were compressed till the blood burst from them.

It was over, and the physician praised her fortitude and courage. But she did not heed

his words. She was unable to speak, and could scarcely raise her eyelids.

"It's more the over-excitement that has prostrated her," he said. "Her strength will come again, and then she'll begin to improve."

Her strength gradually returned, and then they waited for the hour of health. But it did not come. At length, in despair, the doctor gave her up, and again the cloud of sadness and sorrow was in their humble home.

XIV.

DR. MOODY.

It was a glorious morning. How brightly the sun shone! How the birds sang, and how sweet and balmy was the breath that came in through the open windows! It was summer without, but within the recesses of a gentle heart 'twas winter. There the drifting snows had not melted, and there the cold winds were blowing still. So thought Chloe as she was lying in the little bedroom so wearily on that beautiful morning. Some one opened the door-yard gate, and a light step came up the path, then across the kitchen to Chloe's room.

"Why, Jane!" said she, looking up: "is this you?"

"Yes," was the reply. "I didn't see any

one, and I thought perhaps you'd be in here. I heard a good while ago about your being sick."

"I am glad to see you again," replied Chloe. "You haven't been over this way for a good while."

"No; but I've wanted to come. It looks natural around here. I'm sorry to see you sick, though."

"I've been so a long while, Jane," replied Chloe.

"There's a lady over in W——," continued Jane, "that's lain sixteen years with spinal complaint; and I should think she was very much as you are. She's got well now."

"Got well?" echoed Chloe, quickly. "How? what did she do?"

"A new doctor cured her. I never see her; she doesn't live near where I do, but I heard about it."

"What's her name, and where does she live?"

"Her name is Miss Skinner. It's about six

miles from here; but 'twould be easy enough to find the place."

"If she can be cured," thought Chloe, "why can't I? Oh, I wish I could see her!"

She called her father and mother and told them what she had heard. Her father said he would go and see Miss Skinner; and the next morning he started on foot.

Chloe had caught at Jane's words like a drowning man at a straw. She pondered upon them until the strong hope in her mind deepened to a certainty. Her father would see the lady, and perhaps he would find the new doctor there. She would not be surprised, she thought, if he should immediately return with her father; and she busied her mind in wondering what the new remedy would be that was to effect the magic cure. Then she began to think what she would do when she was well; and, unconsciously, her thoughts wandered away into the future that was now radiant with the sunlight of hope.

As the forenoon waned, she began to be im-

patient for her father's return. He came at last, and her heart beat quick when she heard his well-known step on the threshold. She noticed his sorrowful look as he entered her room; but he was weary, she thought, with walking so far.

"Father," said she, eagerly, "how is Miss Skinner? Is she well?"

"No," he replied, with a sigh: "Jane was mistaken. It's a girl that's been sick about a year who is cured; but she wasn't at all like you. Miss Skinner isn't any better than she has been."

How the chill clouds came down upon Chloe's heart! It was winter there again.

After this, they knew not what to do. Chloe did not quite sink under her sufferings, because she still harboured a strong hope of health. For the sake of her father and mother, she tried to be cheerful, but at times she was wellnigh desperate. She hoped she might either die or be well. She could not, *would* not, think of lying there all her life. She wept

a great deal, and often prayed for support. Then she could be calm and raise thankful thoughts for her quiet home and loving friends.

A few months before this, a new physician had come into town. They heard him spoken of as being very skilful; but, as every remedy had failed, they did not call him. One day a lady called to see Chloe. She was acquainted with the new doctor. He had been employed in her family, and she thought he was different from any physician she had before seen. She was confident, if any one could help Chloe, it was he.

Chloe caught at every encouraging thing, and when her father's work was done for the day, and he came into her room, as usual, she told him what the lady said, and added,—

“Perhaps he might help me so I could sit up, if no more.”

“Well,” said her father, “I will go down after him to-morrow, if you think he can do you any good.”

“I’d like to see him; but you have already paid out so much for me, and it’s done no good.”

He went the next morning, and in the afternoon the doctor came. The mother conducted him into the little bedroom, and said,—

“Chloe, this is Dr. Moody.”

“How do you do, Chloe?” said he, pleasantly. “You’ve been confined here a long time.”

Chloe looked up almost timidly; but when she saw that genial face beaming upon her, and heard his kind words, all constraint was gone. She reposed perfect confidence in him from the first moment. The room seemed brighter for his presence, and she could talk with him as friend with friend. The doctor was deeply interested in the gentle girl by whose bedside he was sitting. He thought he never had seen a more expressive face. Her heavy, dark hair was brushed carelessly away from her forehead, and her black eyes beamed with animation as she talked; for his

genial presence had raised her hopes once more to the mountain-tops. He stayed several hours, and kindly and feelingly inquired into every particular of her illness from its commencement. She talked without reserve, and then waited breathlessly to hear what he would say. He did not hesitate, but said,—

“So far as I can understand your case, I cannot see any probability of your permanent relief. Connected with the disease of the spine are other distressing maladies, which are incurable. I do not think you are in any immediate danger. You may live for years, but you will probably always be confined to the bed. You have such strong courage that I could easily flatter you with the hope of being well; but I would not do it. I think it my duty to tell you your condition just as it is.”

He watched her countenance to see how she bore it. She was calm. The blow was so sudden and unexpected that she did not even think or feel. Her heart seemed to be suddenly changed into stone,—it was so very, very

heavy. He talked a while kindly and cheerfully, and then rose to go. Chloe thought she could not speak; but she did.

"Don't tell people about me," she said: "it's such a great trial!"

He turned and said,—

"Chloe, you need not ask me not to tell of it, for I shall blaze it far and near. You have been censured greatly, because people do not know how much you suffer; but they *will* know as soon as *I* can tell it about town. You little know," he continued, (and the tears started to his eyes,) "what have been my feelings since I came in here and found you suffering so severely from disease, knowing how much you have been blamed for what people knew nothing of."

When he left, it seemed as if all light and hope of Chloe's life went with him. She could only close her eyes and almost wish that before the morning should come she might die. Her father soon came in, and said,—

"Well, Chloe, what did the doctor say? Did he think he could help you any?"

Chloe thought she could not answer; but she said,—

"No, sir: he says I can't be cured."

"Well," replied her father, "I haven't thought this good while that you were going to get well. I hoped you would, but didn't expect it."

He said no more, but sighed and looked very sorrowful.

The mother could hardly command herself to go into Chloe's room. She could eat nothing that night, and was too sorrowful to speak.

The night came down in gloomy shadows. Chloe, alone in the darkness, tried to think again. If she could only weep! Such stony calmness was dreadful. The words of the doctor seemed to be still sounding in her ears:—" *You may live for years, but you will probably always be confined to the bed* " The dreadful reality came surging over her like the rushing of

mighty waters, and she wept as she never had wept before. The bitter cup was full. It was crowded to her lips, and she was tasting its bitterest dregs. But such a tempest of feeling could not always last; and at length she began to think more calmly. She saw where she had been resting for earthly comfort. It was on the strong hope of health. Now it was a painful blank: the weary spirit could rest there no longer. But in its place came her Saviour's outstretched arm, strong, yet gentle and comforting. It had long been there, but she, in her blindness, had too often passed it by. How precious now was that arm of Strength! She prayed in fulness of heart, but she only asked for patience and resignation. Then she was calm; and before the gray morning came up in the east, Chloe was peacefully asleep.

XV.

THE DEEP CLOUD.

IN the morning the mother talked with Chloe about the doctor's decision. She had hitherto entertained hope of better things; but now it was gone, and her heart was wrung with sorrow for her child. It was Chloe's turn to be the comforter.

"Don't you know, mother," she said, "how often folks get well after the doctors have given them over? Perhaps something will help me yet. I'm going to talk more with him when he comes again; and he's so skilful, and so good and kind, that I'm *sure* he will do something to make me more comfortable, if no more."

Her words, although they were spoken almost hopelessly, still had hope in them, and both their hearts unconsciously took courage

and cheer. They began to almost count the hours that might pass away before he would come again. One sunny afternoon they heard his wagon stop at the door-yard gate. How glad they were to see him! His presence was like sunshine; for the light and beauty of a sympathizing soul shone through his genial face.

"How is it to-day, Chloe?" said he, in his pleasant way.

"I have a little hope left yet," she replied. "It seems as if you might do something to relieve me. Won't you *try*, doctor?"

"You seem to have confidence in me," he replied, looking upon her compassionately. "I wish I could help you!"

Chloe would not be denied. She urged him to do something, she cared not what. She was not ready to put away all hope.

Moved by her entreaties, he prepared an extremely powerful remedy, which, he told her, would decide whether she could be helped or not. If it increased her suffering, it must be

instantly discontinued; if otherwise, she might hope, perhaps, for temporary relief. He then left; but his anxiety on account of it would not allow him to let many days pass before he was there again. He found Chloe worn and wearied with suffering. She had endured the most excruciating agony, but would not discontinue the application, because she hoped she might gain relief at last. The doctor's first step was to seize the remainder of the medicine and throw it out of the window.

He then fully explained to her the nature of her disease. He told her how very distressing it was, and that it would be still more so as it advanced, and that it was probable that she might live for years in constant and increasing suffering.

For the first time, every shadow of hope was gone. As the doctor went out, she turned her eyes towards the window and saw the light of a gorgeous sunset streaming across the meadow. That glorious light, she knew, was filling the nook where the wild flowers grew, and the clear

waters of the spring were sparkling in the golden rays. Her own gladsome feet would never stray there again,—*never, never!* She never could visit her friends again; she never should see where Rachel lived. But, oh, the green grass in the meadows! If she could but leave this suffering a moment only, and place her weary, weary head there once more! A life of constant and increasing suffering! She knew—she felt—that it must be. What a bitter thought! It made her wild and all-but desperate. She did not weep, but prayed,—wildly at first, and almost sternly. But her better feelings came again, and she prayed meekly but earnestly. She prayed for grace, patience and fortitude. She asked to be perfectly resigned to God's will, whatever it should be. As she became composed in mind, her thoughts went back over the past. All the events of her life, even to her early childhood, came vividly before her. She saw little Beulah's bright face again, and again she rambled over the fields in the careless joy of childhood. She remembered her

dreadful illness, and how her child-heart then learned the one great life-lesson,—that of dependence on her Saviour. She thought of the parting with their pleasant old home, and the dreary removal; and then her mind traced the new and wondrous pleasures that sprang up through all her joyous childhood and youth. She thought how Nancy's death had cast the first deep shadow upon her youthful life,—when the mystery of living was pressing upon her and her young heart was looking forward so earnestly to its Future. The mystery of Living! She had often and painfully felt it; but now it was suddenly made clear. As quick as thought, her mind went back to the night when she and Rachel stood with clasped hands over the dead form of Rena. She remembered vividly her own words and Rachel's:—

“I prayed to-day, Rachel,—and I never prayed so much in earnest in my life,—that God would make me pure before I died.”

“Oh, Chloe, you don't know what you asked

for. You know the Bible says, 'Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.' "

"I know it; but I would be willing to be chastened if I could be as good as she was."

She believed that prayer was to be answered. Her path of life was clear now. Far, far beyond she could see it plainly marked out; and, looking back, she could discern the hand of God leading and guiding her up to the present. A life of suffering must be her's, because in no other way could she be made *pure in heart*. In no other way could his great design be accomplished. She could be resigned; she could be happy, even. All her sorrow now was for her father and mother. She felt that the blow would fall upon them, not upon her. She could bear it all herself; but those dear parents! She wished that she was able to keep away all trouble from their declining years. She wished their aged feet might walk to the grave amid sunshine and flowers. She wanted to fold her arms about them and shield them from every tempest and every storm.

But it could not be. She knew that whatever came upon her fell still more heavily upon them. She could only pray that God would support them. Then, happy and peaceful in mind, trusting in holy promises, Chloe slept.

The sun was brightly shining when she was conscious of taking up another day's burden of suffering. At the first awakening, her mind endeavoured to collect the vague remembrances of the night. It flashed upon her,—those hours of thought and deep feeling, of self-examination and retrospect, that made life so clear and brought to her such peaceful trust. The morning skies were not more serene in their azure than was she in faith in her Maker.

But the parents were full of sorrow. Chloe pitied them deeply. Their breakfast was eaten in silence, and then the father and mother gathered around the lone family altar. Once happy children bowed there with them; but one by one their household treasures had been

taken away. Chloe listened to her father's prayer. She heard him ask that they each might be resigned to God's will, whatever it should be; and she knew that her mother was weeping. After the prayer, the mother went into Chloe's room. She sat down by the bed and wept again. Chloe tried to comfort her.

"I hope I shall be spared to take care of you," she said, as cheerily as she could.

But still the mother wept.

"How can I see you suffer so," she said, "when I had such hope that you would get about again?"

"Mother," replied Chloe, "I only hope that I shall be resigned. I feel that God knows what is best for us."

XVI.

THE LIGHT BEYOND.

DAYS, weeks and months passed away, every moment of which brought its weight of suffering for Chloe. Her nights were sleepless ones; but during the dark hours she prayed much for support under the burden of trouble. She earnestly asked for patience to bear her terrible suffering, and for perfect resignation to God's will, whatever it should be. Her days were filled with faith and trust. Her heart could say, at last, "I'm willing, oh, my God!" She could suffer patiently. She was willing to endure all that she knew the coming years would bring. She could take cheerfully all that her heavenly Father saw fit to place upon her.

She began to see for the first time how many

blessings she had. Her quiet home and loving parents,—what should she do without them? She had the free use of her hands and eyes. How glad she was of these! New friends were springing up all around her, filling her heart with joy. Previous to this, Chloe had been neglected. The trials incident to her peculiar disease had not been made known, and many times she was blamed and censured. But Dr. Moody's influence was soon felt. Many times he told the story of her dreadful suffering and her sweet patience and resignation; and no sooner was it made known than she had the deepest sympathy from all. Old friends, with hearts full of love and kindness, came around her; and many who before were entire strangers soon found their way over the hills to the tiny bedroom. To see Chloe was to love her; and sweet friendships were then formed that have never yet been broken. The neighbours round about them displayed much kindness; and Chloe thought her cup overflowed with blessings. The little children

began to be interested. There was a strife among them to see which would find the first spring-flowers or the first ripe berries for Chloe. Even before the wild flowers came, before the snows were gone, Chloe had fresh green mosses from the woods. The little girls brought their new dolls, and the boys their nice toys, for her to see; and a new dress or jacket was not considered finished until she had bestowed praise and admiration. She loved children, and could enter into their little joys and griefs; and, in return, their child-hands scattered the roses and lilies all along her way.

Still, in the midst of her happiness she must turn away to look in the face the reality of her life. There was sorrow there; but it was not for *herself*. For the sake of her Saviour she had taken up cheerfully the cross of her suffering and had found it lightened of half its weight. It was upon the parents that the trouble fell. It seemed sometimes greater than they could bear; and that she must ever

rest a burden upon them was Chloe's greatest sorrow.

For a long time she had been revolving in her own mind in what way her mother's cares might be relieved. At length, one sleepless night, a plan occurred to her. She did not mention it to her parents in the morning; but it was constantly in her mind through the day. She thought it all over how it could be done, and then, at night, after supper, when they sat talking together in her room, she said,—

“Father, I've thought of a new plan.”

“Well, what is it?” he asked.

“I've been thinking,” she replied, “that there might be a little cupboard fixed at the head of my bed,—right here, you know, where I can reach it. Then my things could be kept in it, where I could get them myself; and it would save mother a great deal of work.”

“Well,” he replied, starting up, “it would be handy and would save your mother a great many steps. I can make one and fix it in the

wall: there's such a wide place between these partitions that it would make the cupboard quite deep."

"So it will, father," replied Chloe. "How nice it will be!"

The next morning he went to work upon it. He made it with three shelves; and, when it was done, he inserted it in the wall, as he had said. Then he put on the door, and the cupboard was completed. Chloe was very glad and very thankful, and found much pleasure in arranging the shelves herself. In one corner she placed her medicine and the little glass to prepare it in. Her mother brought a small green-edged plate, with a nice cake of butter upon it, and two brown cups that she had bought for Nancy and Chloe when they were children together. Several other things were added; and, when it was all arranged, Chloe could not content herself without occasionally opening the door of the new cupboard to see the effect it produced. After that, she had a shelf made and fitted to the wall next

to the cupboard. Then she made some boxes of pasteboard and placed them on the shelf to contain articles for her own use.

But no sooner was this done than her energies were called out to meet another emergency. The winter was drawing near, and she would need a fire in her room. There was no fireplace; and a stove and pipe must be obtained. How was it to be done? She could see no way. Night after night she pondered and thought. At length she said to herself, "My nice dresses and things that I used to wear to meeting, I never shall wear them again. Perhaps I can sell them. I must try."

So she offered them to the friends who came to see her, and was quite surprised that they found so ready a sale. Her mother wept when they were carried away.

"Why, Chloe," she said, "how could you have resolution of mind to sell them?"

"It was very trying to me, mother," she replied, tears starting to her eyes, "but I could

do it, because I saw it was for the best. I never can wear them again; and you know how much we need the money."

The stove and pipe were obtained, and through all that long cold winter Chloe's room was ever cheerful, comfortable and pleasant.

XVII.

"OUT OF THE SHADOW INTO THE SUN."

CHLOE'S cheerfulness was a mystery to a great many of her friends. They could not understand why she was always so happy.

"Chloe," said Dr. Moody one day, "do you take any comfort at all?"

"Oh, yes," she replied: "I have a great many things to enjoy every day."

"Is it possible," said he, "that one in your situation can enjoy any thing?"

"Yes: I think I could not be placed in a condition that would destroy all enjoyment."

"I think," said he, "if I were in your place I should be wretched. I should not wish to live. I could not have patience to endure all that I know you suffer daily."

"I am a great deal happier now," she replied, "than I was before you told me I could

not get well. I don't have so many disappointments. I know what is before me and am resigned to it."

"Chloe," said he, "are you *really* resigned? Can you say that you are *perfectly* willing to lie for years and suffer so much?"

"Yes," she said, calmly, "*I am willing!*"

"Chloe," said he, "I believe you speak the truth; but you are a mystery to me. I don't know how any one can feel like that. I never was more surprised in my life than I was the first time I came here and found you lying here with such a happy face."

"How did you expect to find me?" said she, smiling. "With a face 'long as my arm'?"

"I thought you'd be gloomy and desponding, as a matter of course."

"I *feel* happy, Dr. Moody," she said. "I don't think I should, though, if I hadn't Jesus Christ to lean upon. I often think of what he said of the 'fowls of the air,'—how they 'sow not, neither do they reap, yet our heavenly Father feedeth them.'"

“Chloe,” said he, “do you have such trust as that?”

“Yes, that is *all* my trust. What else have I to lean upon?”

“True, true, poor child! You have not much of this world’s happiness.”

He spoke musingly, and sat with his eyes fixed upon the floor. Chloe watched his benevolent face, and only wished that he, her pleasant friend, knew the joy of the Christian.

“Chloe,” said he, suddenly, “how long have you been confined to your bed?”

“It’s just about five years now,” she replied. “When you first came to see me, I had been confined to the bed four years; and it was then just seven years and a half since I was first taken sick.”

“I was thinking about you,” said Dr. Moody, “when I was riding up here this beautiful afternoon. I wondered how long it had been since you had been out of doors.”

“Oh,” she exclaimed, “what would I not give to go out once more! Couldn’t I be

taken out?" she asked, eagerly. "Can't you, won't you carry me out, Dr. Moody?"

"I would willingly carry you," he replied; "but you know how you suffer whenever you are moved."

"Well, I wouldn't care if I could only go out once, *once* more!"

"I know it would be very delightful, Chloe," he replied; "but it would make you suffer so much that I am afraid it wouldn't pay."

But she would not be denied. She pleaded until he started up and said,—

"Chloe, don't say any more: you shall go, or, at least, I will try, and if you cannot endure it I will put you back."

He first carried out the rocking-chair and placed it upon the green grass by the side of the path that led to the gate. Then he came back, and, taking her in his arms, walked with slow and careful step to the door.

"My poor child," said he, as he noticed the expression of agony upon her face, "it's killing you! I had better take you back!"

“No, no!” she cried: “I will not go back!”

He carried her off from the door-step and placed her in the rocking-chair. It was a warm afternoon in July. The bright flowers in the yard were in the gayest blossom, and the tamarack-trees that shaded the windows were in fresh bloom. The birds sang, and the trees around waved their branches, sending out from their leafy depths dreamy sighs and gentle whisperings. A thin curl of smoke was issuing from one of the chimneys of the house upon the summit of the hill. At the foot, the windows of the red school-house were open, and there came floating upon the still air the sounds of the children's voices from within. As far as the eye could see, the whole landscape was joyous with the summer's beauty and gladness. Chloe, in silence, gazed upon every thing around her, while Dr. Moody stood back, with his arms folded and his lip tremulous with emotion. She turned her head to look up to the window of the chamber that she and Rachel had for their own. As she did so,

she caught sight of his face, and, burying her own in her hands, she burst into tears.

"You must go in now," he said, stepping forward.

"No, no!" she cried: "I wish to look longer."

She gazed around again and again; for she knew it was for the last time.

"You have been out twenty minutes," said he. "You *must* go in."

He took her in his arms and carried her slowly out of the summer sunshine into the dreary shadow of walls again. She was in great distress when she was laid upon the bed; and her heart seemed ready to break. The doctor walked the room, and his tears dropped upon the floor.

"I am sorry I came to-day," said he; "but I am not to blame; for I should not have carried you out if you had not urged me. I knew how it would affect you. You need not ask me to carry you out again; for I *never shall*."

Her removal was attended with more serious

consequences than even Dr. Moody had feared. For many weeks she was forced to endure dreadful suffering.

“My poor child,” said the doctor, “how can you endure it? To think that you could not be carried out of doors to look a few moments without suffering so much! I blame myself for it. If I had not carried you out, you would have been saved all this.”

But Chloe did not regret it. She had felt once more the green grass under her feet and the free air upon her brow; and the memory, like a beautiful dream, was folded down deep in her heart. There was a sweet picture painted there, that would never be effaced. It was an old, familiar picture, retouched with new and glowing colours. A grass-grown door-yard, with gay flowers blooming brightly there; a green meadow and hill-side with waving forest-trees; a quaint old house, with the blue smoke curling from its chimney; and the red school-house, with open windows, and monotonous sound of children’s voices from

within. In every point of the picture, too, were hidden old associations, now newly awakened. She gazed upon the one and revelled in the other until her heart grew young and light again. But it could not always last. She must turn away to look in the face the stern reality of her life. Henceforth the tiny bedroom must be all her little world. She must never hope to go out again until she should be borne away to her last resting-place. Then other cares began to press upon her. The parents were growing old. Sorrow and trouble had left their impress, and the strength of each was beginning to yield. The father was unable to work as formerly. The precious savings of his hard-working days had been spent for her; and Chloe foresaw that, sooner or later, the care of obtaining things necessary for family use must fall upon her. She had hitherto thought her burden as heavy as she could well bear; but this only called out another faculty.

"If I could only do something," she said

one day to a young friend who came in, "I should be so much happier! I cannot bear to be obliged to be idle."

"What could you do, Chloe?" he asked. "Surely you cannot sew?"

"No," she replied; "I am not able to sew, now; but I think I could make needle-books, or something of the kind, if I had any thing to make them of."

"What would you want?" he asked.

"I should want pieces of silks and such things," she replied; "and I suppose I should need some pasteboard and some flannel."

"Perhaps I can get you some," he said.

So he went around among his lady acquaintances; and in about a week from that time he came again to Chloe and brought a roll of pieces of nice silks and gave her some money to buy pasteboard and flannel. Chloe was both glad and thankful. She did not know how to make them; but she began by cutting the patterns, and succeeded in the making even beyond her own expectations.

In a few weeks she had sold three and received fifty cents for them. It was the first money she had earned since she was confined to her bed; and she was much encouraged. Then she made a small work-box; and that was sold. Her friends at length became interested, and sent her nice paper and pretty pictures for work-boxes. She had a great deal of natural ingenuity and an innate sense of artistic beauty and harmony, and there was a perfectness, rarely equalled, in whatever came from her fingers. No sooner were these seen and admired than orders began to come in from ladies round about. Thus encouraged, she worked on. The planning beguiled the nights of their painful moments, and during the hours of the day she was happy in gratifying her own taste, until at length the demand for her exquisitely designed and made needle-books and work-boxes was greater than she could supply.

"There, mother!" she said: "you know I told you once I hoped I should be spared to

take care of you. How could I do it if God had not given me this gift? How thankful I am for my hands and eyes!"

So she worked, prayed and trusted, firmly believing that to her heavenly Father she was "of more value than many sparrows."

M

XVIII.

NEAR THE GRAVE.

BUT Chloe's faith was to meet another trial,—another and perhaps a stronger test. She had already shown her resignation to long years of sorrow and suffering, and could find sweetness even in such a life. Could she bid adieu to it now, to taste the bitterness of dying? And could she meet, without shrinking, all the darkness and terror of the grave? Could she “walk through the valley of the shadow of death and fear no evil”?

One night, when lying alone in the darkness, she was taken very ill. It was an effect of the disease that she knew would come; and the doctor had told her that when it came he feared she would die. A deathlike chill and cold perspiration came over her; she could not move; she could not speak, even, to wake

her parents, who were quietly sleeping in the next room. "Am I dying?" she thought. "Can it be death?" Her father arose at five o'clock,—his usual hour,—and opened the door of Chloe's room, as he always did, to look in upon her. Seeing her alarming condition, he immediately called his wife, then took a hasty breakfast and started to walk the three miles to Dr. Moody's residence.

"I would willingly go," said the doctor to him, "if I could do her any good; but I cannot endure to see her suffer so much, when I know I can do nothing for her relief." However, moved by the father's urgent entreaties, he went.

"I have come, Chloe," he said, as he entered the room; "but I can do nothing for you."

"Tell me what you think of me," she said, with difficulty.

"I think it very doubtful whether you live many days," was the reply. "If you survive this, you must drag out a life of pain and misery."

Before the day waned, Chloe grew worse; and for two days she suffered unspeakable distress. The doctor could do nothing to relieve her, and the parents were in an agony of grief. In her childhood days, Chloe was the pet of the household, and as she emerged into youth she grew more and more to be the light of their humble home. Loss and bereavement had bound the three together in no common tie; and now Chloe was the idol of her parents' hearts, the prop of their declining years. Her mother, in this greatest of all her trials, endeavoured to bring to her own mind the peace and resignation of the gospel. She tried to pray, to lift her stricken heart to God; and she arose from her knees with the calmness that always follows an earnest prayer. She would give her up then, she thought, without a murmur. She went into the little bedroom and said,—

“Chloe, how are you in mind? Do you feel willing to die?”

“I am willing for myself,” replied Chloe.

"I feel that I love Jesus and that I am going to a better world; but I do cling so to father and you! If it is the will of God to spare me, I had rather live to be a comfort to you."

The mother pressed the hand of her child, and then her maternal love burst forth.

"My dear child," she cried, "how can I, oh, how can I give you up? I know God has the best right to you; but it is so hard to part! Oh, how can I give you up?"

"Mother," said Chloe, "will you forgive all that you have seen wrong in me?"

"My dear child," said the mother, "I have nothing to forgive. I am afraid I think you are too perfect."

Chloe's heart was ready to break at the thought of leaving her parents, and her mother went, sobbing, from the room. She could not trust herself to enter it again; for Chloe could not live, it was thought, until the morning, and the mother was wearied with care and anxiety, and could not see her child pass through the agonies of death. So, leaving

her in the care of tried and valued friends, she sought her sleepless pillow. All night long the face of her suffering one was right before her. Her heart was borne down with the weight of woe. The last gleam of the brightness of life would find a grave with Chloe. She arose in the morning, dreading and fearing to hear the tidings. But Chloe was still alive. To the surprise and astonishment of all, in a few days she was slightly better, and lived on through the weeks of extreme suffering that followed. It was a long time before she was able to work again; but she was spared, and that was sufficient cause for the deepest joy and thankfulness. Said Dr. Moody to her one day, "Chloe, if the day of miracles was not passed away, I should think that God was working one in your case."

"I suppose my work is not done yet," she replied: "so he has let me live a little longer. Anyway, Dr. Moody, I feel the *certainty* of death now as I never felt it before."

“I thought you would die, Chloe,” said he, “and I told you so. It is only the knowledge of your suffering that makes me *not* glad that you are spared.”

Not long after this, Dr. Moody left the town to make his home in a distant city. Before he left, he came one day to say the last “good-bye” to Chloe.

“Dr. Moody,” said Chloe, “you have been a kind friend to me; and I cannot tell you how much I shall miss you. I never can forget you.”

“I never shall forget you, Chloe,—*never*. You have done me good. Remember me when you pray.”

Chloe never saw Dr. Moody again. Only two years, and then came the sad news of his death; and Chloe’s tears fell at the tidings, for in him she knew that she had lost a friend. But his memory lived in Chloe’s heart, and it lives there still, growing fresh and fragrant over the wreck of the years. Even now, when Chloe, in her gentle talks, brings up the

olden association, her thoughts and words often cluster around the memory of him who was the kind physician, the full-souled man, and ever to her a true and pleasant friend.

XIX.

PLEASANT INCIDENTS.

ONE morning in spring, a little boy came to see Chloe. He was a bright-looking little fellow, with a pleasant face and blue eyes that now were sparkling with animation. He had in one hand a small hoe and in the other a damask rose-bush.

"I've brought this for you, Chloe," he said; "and I want to set it out right before your window, where you can see it."

"Why; did you bring it for *me*?" said Chloe. "How much I shall think of it! Father will help you set it out."

"'Twon't do to set it there," said the father. "The ground is so wet that rose-bushes won't grow there. I have tried it a great many times. You must put it at the front part of the house."

"Chloe can't see it there," said the boy, with quivering lip. "I want it where she can see it."

"Well," said the mother, "I can carry the roses to her when they come. Won't that do?"

But he was not quite satisfied with this disposal of his rose-bush; and the next day he was there again with a lilac-tree, which he set out himself before Chloe's window.

"How nice that will shade my window!" said Chloe. "I shall think a great deal of it. Come in here now, and I will show you something."

He went in, and she took from the shelf a box and raised the cover.

"Oh! what a nice box!" he exclaimed. "Did you make it?"

"Yes: I made it."

"Did you make all these things?—this little sofa and chair and cup?"

"Yes," replied Chloe; "and I never saw a sofa, either."

"Why, it looks just like one!" said the boy.
"How did you make it? It isn't sewed?"

"Yes, I made it all with my needle."

"Why, I don't see any stitches!"

"Look sharp," said Chloe, smiling, "and I guess you can see some."

"Oh, I shouldn't think you could! I shouldn't think you would know how!"

"I planned it all out in the night," said Chloe, "when I could not sleep. I have been more than a year making the box and all the things in it."

"Oh, I shouldn't think you could!" he exclaimed again; and he went away, with his little head full of wonder and admiration, while Chloe's thoughts uprose in thankfulness that God had put it in the hearts of little children to do for her those pleasant acts of kindness that helped so much to lighten her life of the cares that now were becoming daily more pressing. The parents were old and broken in health, and little by little the family cares were being transferred from them to their

suffering child. It brought forth all her ingenuity to plan, and all her energy to obtain, with their limited means, things necessary for family use. She worked when her constant suffering would allow her, and her beautiful work-boxes, needle-books and pincushions met with a ready sale. Many, moved by sympathy and affection, gave her extra prices; and thus for the time their wants were supplied.

But the winter came on severely. . The father was still unable to work; and, for the first time, poverty seemed to stare them in the face. One afternoon, Chloe was lying as usual upon her bed. Her anxiety for her parents had aggravated her disease, and she was prostrated with more than her usual suffering. Her faith and trust were dimmed for the moment, and she saw nothing before her but darkness and sorrow. Through the little bedroom-window she looked out upon the dreary expanse of snow, and watched the evening shadows as they closed thickly around. Her mother came in, and dropped the curtain,

placed a lighted candle on the stand, and then seated herself wearily in the rocking-chair. Her father soon followed. He had a weekly paper in his hand, and, drawing his chair near the light, he slowly unfolded it. He read in silence a few moments, and then exclaimed,—

“Why, here’s an account of the revival over in the village! Quite a long piece about the meetings!”

“Why, is there?” said Chloe. “Do read it, father, won’t you?”

Just then they heard the music of sleigh-bells coming down the hill. How merry and pleasant it sounded!

“Why, they’ve stopped here!” exclaimed the mother, hastily rising.

The kitchen-door opened, and she went forward to greet the new-comers. A young man, formerly of that neighbourhood, entered, followed by a group of young people.

“Good-evening,” he exclaimed: “we’ve come over to see Chloe. Can we go right in?”

“How do you do, Chloe?” said he: “I’ve

brought some of my young friends over to see you. We gave up our meeting to-night on purpose to come."

"We are almost all strangers," said a young girl, stepping to the bedside, "but we thought it wouldn't make any difference. We have often heard about you, and wanted to see you."

"Yes, Chloe," rejoined the young man: "we have all found Jesus Christ precious to our souls; and we wanted to talk with you."

"How glad I am!" said Chloe, as soon as she could speak. "How glad I am to see you all! I have heard about your meetings; but I didn't expect you would take the trouble to come and see me. I used to enjoy going to meeting, but now I am deprived of that privilege. Get some chairs, won't you, and sit down where I can see you all. And so you are all young converts?" she continued. "How happy your faces look! It makes me think how I used to be around as you are. I didn't know, then, any thing about trouble. I thought I knew what 'twas to be a Christian; but I

never did know until I was laid upon this bed. Jesus Christ was never so precious to me as then."

"Are you always so cheerful?" said one, timidly. "Don't you ever feel sad?"

"Oh, yes: I have a great many sad hours. I was feeling very sad just before you came; but you have driven it all away. You have made me so happy by coming to-night!"

"Can't you sing something?" she added. "I should like to hear you very much."

"Let's sing," said one,—

"'Come, thou Fount of every blessing.'"

They sang; and the old hymn went up from their youthful voices with no common earnestness.

"We will try to pray," said the young man who had entered first. They all kneeled and bowed their heads. It was a young convert's prayer,—simple and broken, but earnest and touching. The father and mother also kneeled with them; and when they rose from their

knees, tears dimmed their aged eyes. Chloe's heart was full.

"It's so pleasant," said she, "to see so many young people beginning the Christian life together! You don't know how happy you have made me, and how much good you have done by coming."

"You have done us more good than we have done you," said the young girl who had spoken to Chloe first. "I never shall forget this visit. It has taught me never to be ungrateful again."

"I've been thinking," said another, "of that text in the Book of the Revelation where it says, 'There'll be no night there!' It's been in my mind all the time I was sitting here."

"Let's find it," said a young man who had not before spoken. He took the old family Bible, and, turning to the last chapter of Revelation, read aloud:—

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever."

A roll of bills was slipped into Chloe's hand, and then they bade her a reluctant "good-night," and she heard them singing as they went up the hill. Her heart was light again, and she fell asleep with these beautiful words in her mind:—"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever."

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XX.

THE MOTHER'S ILLNESS.

"I THINK I had better not go out to-day," said Chloe's father, one Sabbath morning.

"Oh, yes, I think you can go," replied the mother. "I am better than I was yesterday."

"I'm afraid you are not well enough to stay alone. I guess I'd better not go."

So saying, he took down the Bible and seated himself in his favourite chair to read.

"Why, father," said the mother again, "you can go to meeting. I think I shall be well as usual before night."

It always required something unusual to keep him from going to the place of worship; and this morning the air was mild and pleasant, the roads were good for walking, and, being again assured by his wife, he made

ready and started. She watched him from the window until he disappeared over the hill, and then, with more than her usual alacrity, she went around to do the necessary morning housework. As soon as the rooms were neatly swept, she took the Bible which he had laid down, and drew the arm-chair he had vacated into Chloe's room. She talked a while more cheerily than usual, then, opening the Bible, slowly turned, one after another, its old, yellow leaves. Chloe took up her own book again and commenced reading. She was startled at length by the heavy sound of the Bible falling upon the floor; and, looking up, she saw her mother sitting with her eyes wearily closed and her head drooping heavily on one side.

"Mother!" said she, "mother! what is the matter?"

She opened her eyes and said,—

"I believe I am very sick. I wish your father would come."

"Draw your chair close to my bed, mother," said Chloe.

She succeeded in doing so; and then her head drooped heavily again and her eyes closed.

“Mother! mother!” said Chloe, again trying to rouse her.

She opened her eyes, and said, in a faint whisper,—

“Why don’t your father come?” and relapsed again into an unconscious state.

Chloe did not know what to do. By bending forward, she could see the face of the long clock in the kitchen. It was only a few minutes past one. Her father would not come until four o’clock. Her mother, she knew, was very, very ill. Every moment she was growing more and more unconscious. She feared she would fall from her chair; she might die, even! What should she do? What could she do? In her desperation, she opened the door of the little cupboard at the head of her bed. Espying a bottle of camphor there, she hastily mixed a few drops with some water, and succeeded in arousing her

mother sufficiently to swallow it. This revived her for the moment, and Chloe said,—

“You had better try to get to the bed, mother, and lie down.”

After trying several times, she arose from her chair, and, by clinging to the stand, and then to the side of the door, she finally reached her own bed and fell upon it with a deep groan.

“Mother,” said Chloe, “are you safe on the bed?”

She only heard a faint sound in reply.

“Mother,” she said again, “mother, are you there?”

There was no answer.

“Mother, mother,” she cried: “can’t you speak to me?”

She listened, but heard no sound in reply save the slow ticking of the old clock and the excited throbbing of her own heart.

“She may be dead,” thought she. “Oh, what can I do? O God,” she prayed, “help

me! oh, help me! Mother, mother," she shrieked, "do, oh, do speak to me!"

Still no reply. All was still, silent and solemn as the grave. Chloe leaned forward to look at the clock. 'Twas just two. Two more hours must pass away before her father would come. "What *could* she do?"

As the dreary moments crawled along, a strange fear began to creep over her. She dared not break the silence by calling her mother's name again. She dreaded even the sound of her own voice upon that fearful stillness. A passing cloud obscured the sun, and Chloe's room grew dark with the shadow it cast. The little bedroom seemed like a sepulchre, and, cold and shuddering, she buried her face in her hands. She could do nothing then but pray. That was what she always did, whatever her trouble might be; for Chloe's reliance upon God was childlike and beautiful in its simplicity and perfectness. During the years of her suffering, she had attained to a rare spiritual growth. God *was*

near to her, and in his nearness was a loving Father. As the child, with quivering lip, carries to the parent all his little troubles, so, trustingly, did Chloe in her pure-heartedness go to God for comfort and support. So, with hands pressing tightly upon closed eyelids, she silently and trustingly prayed.

As the clock neared the hour of four, Chloe caught the sound of her father's well-known step on the threshold. He entered the room, and she heard him approach the bed where her mother was lying. Chloe scarcely breathed. Would he find her dead? or was she living? He called his wife's name; and Chloe's heart stood still to listen! There was a slight rustling and a faint attempt to speak. She was not dead, then; she still breathed! How the tears, in a torrent of relief, rushed to Chloe's eyes! But she kept them back; for her father came into her room, saying,—

“How long has your mother been so, Chloe?”

“Ever since noon.”

"Well," he replied, with a sigh, "I shall have to leave you alone again; for I must get some one to go for the doctor, and see if I can find anybody to come and help us."

He went out; and then Chloe's feelings overcame her. She wept, sobbed and prayed by turns; but it was all in thankfulness and gratitude that her mother was still spared.

When her father returned, one of the neighbouring women was with him. The doctor came, and every means were used for the sufferer's relief. At length she opened her eyes and was able to speak.

"Mother," said Chloe, "won't you speak to me?"

"My poor child!" said she, faintly.

Soon she opened her eyes again, and said, "Father!—where is he?"

"Here, sitting right by you."

"I may not live," she said; "and what will Chloe do? The poor child can never walk again; and who'll take care of her?"

Days and weeks passed away. They were

days and weeks of sorrow; for a mother was hovering between life and death. It was a mother in whom was centred all the earthly love of a husband and child. Would God be pitiful? Would the arm of the Angel of Death be stayed?

Days came and went, and then the dark cloud was slowly lifted away. One day the mother was taken up and placed in her straight-backed rocking-chair, and the father drew her into Chloe's room. They were very glad to see each other again,—so glad that each could say but little. The mother had been near the open gate of death, and its shadow seemed upon her yet.

"Every thing seems strange," she said. "It really seems strange to think I am going to live. I wanted to get well, to be a comfort to you and father. That was all I thought of."

"I prayed," said Chloe, "that I might give you up willingly; but I *couldn't feel resigned*. I thought you wasn't to die yet, or God would have given me more strength to bear it."

XXI.

MARY'S DUCKS.

It was a warm day in summer. The window in Chloe's room was open, and all day long birds had sung, bees had hummed, insects had chirped and wind-waved trees had sighed and whispered. It was now four o'clock, and the public school was just out. How loudly the boys shouted and how merrily the girls laughed and talked! Chloe could hear it all through the open window of her tiny bedroom. The little girls whose way led them by "Chloe's" always called when they went home at night. So she listened for them, as she always did, and soon heard their voices as they came up the hill. They opened the gate and came in; but Chloe saw that Mary was not with them.

"Why, where's Mary?" she asked.

"She's gone home," was the reply.

"Gone home without coming in to see me? What does that mean?"

"Oh, she wanted to go," said little Kate, roguishly.

"Ah, you little witches," said Chloe, as she saw them exchanging roguish smiles and glances, "you've got something afloat! Tell me what it is." But they only laughed and said nothing. Soon Chloe heard some little feet tripping across the kitchen, and a blue-eyed, golden-haired little girl peeped in at the door.

"Is that you, Mary?" said Chloe. "Come in here." She came in with a large basket in her hand, which she was trying to cover with her apron.

"What have you there?" asked Chloe. "Let me see."

Mary approached, uncovered the basket, and Chloe looked in and saw four little young ducks cuddled together in the bottom of the basket.

"Oh! oh!" she exclaimed: "what nice little

ducks!" Then the little girls all clapped their hands and laughed merrily.

"We wanted to *s'prise* you," said one.

"We didn't want you to know that Mary was going to bring 'em."

"Yes," said little Kate: "I tried just as hard to keep in and not tell."

"They're *my* ducks," cried Mary. "You ought to see them swim! They'll sail all around so beautifully! Oh, I wish you *could* see 'em swim!"

"I wish I could," said Chloe. "Wouldn't they swim in a pan of water?"

"I guess they would."

"You may go and ask mother to give you a pan with some water in it, and we'll see if we can't make them sail."

This was enough. The little feet flew, in a twinkling, to make the request. A pan filled with water was placed upon the stand by Chloe's bed, and Mary took up the precious ducks and put them carefully on the top of the water. The little creatures knew their

element at once. They shook their wings, "ducked" their heads and sailed around, to the great delight of Chloe and the children.

"A'n't you glad," said one, "that Mary brought these in for you to see?"

"Yes," replied Chloe, "I'm very glad. I like to see little ducks."

"There, little duckies!" said Mary, at length: "you must go home now!"

So saying, she put them back in the bottom of the basket and covered the basket with her apron. Then the little girls bade Chloe good-night, and all went home. They had not been gone long before the teacher came in, to whom Chloe related the pleasing incident that had just happened.

"'Twould seem incredible, wouldn't it?" replied the teacher, "to one who didn't know you, that little children could take so much interest in an invalid. I was thinking about you," she continued, "while I was walking up the hill. Before I came over here to teach, I had heard about you being confined to your

bed so many years and suffering so much, and somebody told me that you lived near the school-house. I thought you would be gloomy and low-spirited and would be no society for me. I thought I shouldn't come in more than three times all summer, and then I should put on a long face and just step in and look at you. But here I find myself three times a day, instead of three times all summer."

"I like to have the teachers come in," replied Chloe. "It is always a sad day to me when the school closes. I become so attached to one teacher, and I don't know who the next will be."

"I think sometimes that it is providential that I was called to take this school near you."

"I think *every thing* is providential," said Chloe. "But what makes it seem so to you?"

"Because you are doing me so much good."

"I do you good? Why, it doesn't seem as if I could do anybody any good."

"Well, you have. You've given me ideas of life different from what I ever had before."

"Why," said Chloe, in surprise, "I'm sure I've never said much to you."

"It isn't what you *say*, so much. It's the *way you live*. I feel myself rebuked every time I see you."

"It's been a trial to me," said Chloe, "because I could not be around in the world and could never be the means of doing any good. I used to have great ideas about that."

"Why, Chloe," said the teacher, earnestly, "I do believe you do more good lying here than you ever would if you had been 'around in the world,' as you say. When I get so restless and discontented as I am sometimes, I think of you with all your troubles and all your sufferings, yet every day so calm and patient and trustful. Were you always so, Chloe?"

"Oh, I used to have a great many sad days. Sometimes, when I thought much, I'd be so perplexed! I'd think how pleasant it would be to get up in the morning and go out and walk on the green grass and see the flowers;

and then I'd think what I might have been, perhaps, if I'd had my health; and such a feeling would come over me! I could not help asking myself, 'Is it right? Is it right?' But now I *know* it is all right. I was naturally light and gay; and if I had been around as others are, I should have been apt to be led away into every temptation. God knew it would be so: so he put me here to save me."

"I shall need a great deal to save me," said the teacher, with tearful eyes. "Oh, Chloe, what will it be? *What will it be?*"

"I don't know," said Chloe. "I hope you'll be spared any great trial."

"I have heard people pray," replied the teacher, "for God to 'make them what he would have them to be.' Now, I never could pray like that, for I know he would send troubles to make me so; and I dare not ask it. What can I do, Chloe?"

"You can't do any thing but *pray* and *trust*, and, if trials come, make the best of them. By-and-by, you know, the veil will be taken

away; and then we shall see clearly. We shall look away back and see why these things are so. We shall know *why* all is for the best. Oh, that hope is worth every thing!"

"You talk so comforting, Chloe," said the teacher. "I've been wretched all day, and I felt as if I wanted to talk with you; and you have done me so much good!"

"You've done me good too," said Chloe.

With tearful eyes, the teacher rose to go. She went out into the summer sunshine with her heart more in harmony with nature's beauty. There was a firm purpose in her soul that she would henceforth strive to live for the right. She would work with all her strength and earnestness, and would trust the rest with her Maker. Chloe, left behind with her weight of pain and suffering, looked out upon the green meadow and felt her heart lifted up with renewed courage. She would wait, pray and trust, and she too, with all perfectness of faith, could leave the end with God.

XXII.

GOLDEN WEDDING, AND CHLOE'S REMOVAL.

TIME rolled on, as it ever rolls, ceaseless and fleeting. Days glided into weeks, weeks passed into months, the months were counted by years, and the parents still lived. They were now seventy-one years of age. It was the year 18—, and the eleventh day of January would be their “golden wedding,”—the fiftieth anniversary of their marriage-day. Mr. Yale appointed a meeting at their own house upon the occasion, and many of their friends gathered together, while he discoursed to them of the uncertainty and unfathomableness of the present life and the light and beauty of the heavenly life to which the two, hand in hand, were hastening. He offered thanks to God for his kindness and mercy in sparing them each to the other so long a time, and

asked that all down the steps of their declining years their aged heads might still be crowned with his unspeakable love and goodness.

To Chloe it was a joyful day. The sound of prayer and praise in their humble home was sweet to hear, and her heart overflowed with gratitude for her numberless blessings,—her quiet home, her loving parents, their much-loved minister and their many kind and pleasant friends. To them truly it was a “golden wedding” and a day long to be remembered.

Still the years rolled on and on, each one bringing to Chloe its additional burden. Her constant suffering was more excruciating, her hourly pain more intense. In addition to this, the family care rested upon her. Her parents leaned upon her as their only earthly prop. Her arm must support them. To her it was given to strew with roses and lilies their downward path to the grave. But every duty laid upon her only served to bring out more strongly her native character. Her natural buoyancy combined with her simple pure-

heartedness, her forethought and efficiency, her firm sense of duty, strong affection and unwavering trust, all helped to form a nature upon which the old as well as the young loved to *rest*.

One evening, in the spring-time, they were sitting, as usual, in Chloe's room. The father was reading by the candle on the stand, the mother with her knitting-work sat back in the rocking-chair, and Chloe, upon her bed, was making a bright-coloured needle-book of her own exquisite designing.

"The room is cold," said the mother, slightly shivering.

"It's cold," said Chloe, "because there are so many cracks in it. If there is any wind, it all comes in. I do wish we could have it repaired! Father," she continued, "don't you remember when you built this little bedroom, how I played around on the boards? I didn't know then how much I was going to suffer in it. Now it's all coming to pieces."

"Yes," said the father, looking up on the

darkened beams: "the old house fails as well as we.

"How much would it cost to have it fixed, father?" asked Chloe.

"'Twould be a number of dollars," replied he. "I can't tell exactly."

Chloe sighed. She knew she could not pay for it. The mother sighed too, and said,—

"I wish we could have it done; but I don't see how we can."

"Perhaps there'll be a way provided," said Chloe. "I've noticed that, when I want a thing *very much*, it almost always comes in some way."

The next day Chloe was surprised by a visit from a young man who had formerly taught the winter school. As he was leaving, he put into her hand a small package, saying, "Here, Chloe: I've been getting up a little subscription among my friends for you. It's only a trifle, but it may do you a little good."

Chloe unrolled the package and counted the bills it contained, to the amount of nine dollars.

How providential! 'Twas just what she wanted. God put it in his heart, she was sure. She called her father and mother in and said, "See! see! it's all right about my room. I was *sure* it would come; and it has, when I didn't expect it, either."

That evening, when the work was done, they talked the matter over again. They could have the room repaired now, and Chloe wished that it could be made larger. It would be more pleasant and convenient when she had so much company. But, in that case, she must be moved out,—which would be attended with much difficulty and would greatly increase her suffering. Still, she really needed more room. Her mother was growing old and forgetful; and, with her usual forethought, she considered that it might become very necessary that the articles indispensable for her own comfort and use should be under her own supervision. Her disease increased with the years, and, as time passed away, a removal would be more difficult than at present. So,

after days of prayerful deliberation, she decided that it should be done. A carpenter was engaged to do the work, and the room where Nancy and Rena died was to be made ready for Chloe. It seemed a long journey to her. It was her constant thought for days. It would be a great change. What would it bring to her, and what would it take away? She could not help feeling sad at the thought of leaving her little room for a short time even.

The day came when she was to be taken out. She was moved from her bed to a lounge placed by the side of it, and then two men lifted it carefully from the floor. How strangely the kitchen looked as she passed through! Her father's work-bench was in its accustomed corner, and through the window she caught a glimpse of the freshly-leaved trees in the yard. They carried her through the door into the room where her sisters died, and placed her upon the bed where she had seen them breathe their last. She was in an agony of distress.

She could hardly help screaming with anguish. So much was her suffering increased, that several days passed before she cared to look around upon the old room. Then how familiar and how strange every thing seemed! There was the fireplace, and the little cupboard, with its narrow door, in the corner by the chimney-side. The dark seams in the whitewashed ceiling: how well she remembered every bend and curve they made! The bed stood near a window, from which, for the first time in thirteen years, Chloe looked out upon the street. The horses and wagons, and the oxen with their loaded teams, as they passed, looked very strange to her unaccustomed eyes. It was a great change to her. It was a breaking off from her monotonous every-day living. All the past came crowding vividly before her, and she hardly recognised herself as the suffering invalid of so many years. She had almost laid aside the burdens of her old life to live again in the brightness of her childhood and in the joyousness and dreamy aspira-

tions of youth. The days passed, long and sunny, and Chloe watched the growth of the grass in the door-yard and saw the little birds build their nests in the trees. The wild flowers were gone, and now, in their stead, the children brought in half-opened rosebuds. Still went the beautiful days of early summer. The roses were in full bloom, and the birds were sitting quietly upon finished nests. In the mean time the work had been going on in the little bedroom. It was completed, and Chloe was to be moved back.

When the day came, her favourite little girls were there to carry back her boxes and place them on the shelves and to arrange her things anew in the cupboard. Then she was laid again upon the lounge, took the last look of the old room, and in severe suffering was placed once more upon her own bed. But what a change! How new, strange and pleasant looked her little room! It was so much larger, and new windows had been made in it, and a new cupboard. A chest of drawers had

been inserted in the wall; and, what was best of all, there was a little square window back of her bed, which made the room look still more light and cheerful.

"I am glad to get home again!" said Chloe. "My dear little cupboard!" she added, opening it. "Here are all my things again, fixed so nice! How I have missed it!"

"I have missed it too," said the mother. "I didn't realize before how many steps it saved me to have so many things around your bed, where you can get them. I could not get along without help if you had not the cupboard and things convenient to wait upon yourself."

"This stick that father made for me to open and shut my door with saves you work too," added Chloe.

"Yes," replied the mother: "we could not get along without that, either."

Chloe's suffering was greatly increased by her removal; but her heart had been made younger by it. The change, while it had taken nothing away from the depth of her spiritual

life, had added to it beauty and freshness. It was true that she had suffered more than her usual amount of pain and sorrow during the time that had passed; but olden memories and associations were made fresher, and, in the midst of her pain, the remembrance of her stay in the old room was pleasant.

As time passed, they gradually fell back into the accustomed ways. Sickness, and poverty with its bitterness of trial, came upon them; but through it all Chloe lovingly stayed up the aged hands of her parents with the strong arms of her faith. Her only thought now was for her father and mother, her only prayer for life, that she might live to care for them. So, loving and patient, earnest and trustful, looking forward to the blessed rest, Chloe worked, prayed and trusted.

XXIII.

PROVIDENCES.

It was twilight of the New Year's day,—the first day of the year 18—. The parents had just arisen from the supper-table, when the father heard a knock at the door and moved forward to answer it.

"What's come?" said the mother, as she saw him trying to lift something heavy that was standing without.

"Something for Chloe," was the reply.
"It's a new stove!"

"Why," said the mother, "Cousin Thomas must have sent it, then. He said when he was here that she ought to have a new one, and that perhaps some of the Hartford folks would help about it; but Chloe didn't expect it. How glad she will be! Every cold day this winter she has had to lie there shivering."

"Here's a great bag full of something," continued the father. "I don't know what."

"Take them right into Chloe's room," said the mother, "and then we'll see."

The stove was lifted in for Chloe's inspection; then the laden bag was placed close beside her bed. The father opened it and drew out the bundles, one after another. Sugar, tea, crackers, rice; and then came a large, nice New Testament for Chloe, from a lady whom she never saw. Still other bundles; and at last, underneath all the rest, a gift from Uncle Arba. It was a large package, containing calico dresses for Chloe and her mother, and one of Uncle Arba's long, kind letters inside, with the names of the persons from whom the presents came, and many wishes of a "Happy New Year" from their stranger friends.

"It is a 'Happy New Year,' isn't it, mother?" said Chloe, with tear-filled eyes.

The next morning the children came in to see Chloe, as they always did on their way to

school. They were delighted with the new stove.

"I say, boys," said one, "can't we put it up for her?"

"Yes," said another. "Let's not go to school until we've made a fire in Chloe's new stove!"

"Agreed!" said they; and all went to work. The old broken stove was taken away, the new one, with its nice pipe, put up in its place, and at just ten o'clock a bright fire was burning in it.

"Now, boys," said one, "we must go, and take what the master gives."

The teacher did look displeased as they entered the school-room, and inquired, in a stern voice, "why they were all so late."

"We stayed to fix up Chloe's new stove for her," was the reply.

"Ah! well," said the teacher, (and his face relaxed into a smile,) "good deeds for Chloe are better even than lessons."

Not long after that, a young man formerly

from that neighbourhood, but now residing in another town, came to see Chloe. After a long, earnest talk, he arose to go. Said he, "I have had a good visit, Chloe. I always do. You know how many times I have been here before and have never given you any thing; but now I am going to give you something. I have been thinking, since I sat here, how pleasant it would be for you to have a clock in your room, where you can see the time of day. I have four clocks that I took in trade: I shall sell three and keep the other for you. You may tell your father to get a shelf ready for it; for I shall bring it in the course of two or three weeks."

Chloe was overjoyed; but in a moment more she was almost overawed, for never before, she thought, had she seen in the little things of every-day life the hand of God more plainly. A clock in her room was what she long had wished for. Especially had she longed for it during her long and sleepless nights; but it was a superfluous luxury, that she had no right

to think of, and she put away the thought without even mentioning it to her mother. But here it had come,—the very thing she most wished, and in a way she least expected. It was sent from God, she was sure.

Her father made ready the shelf; and in about two weeks came the clock, long to be to Chloe a faithful friend and the cheerful companion of many a wearisome and suffering night.

The next morning, when the school-children came, they were both surprised and delighted at Chloe's treasure.

"We won't go," said one, "until we have heard it strike."

In a few moments the new clock pealed forth the hour of nine.

"Oh! oh!" cried one: "isn't it *real music*?"

"Yes," replied a dark-eyed little girl,—“if it did not strike nine and tell us that it's school-time.”

"Don't you like to go to school?" asked Chloe.

“Yes,” was the reply; “but I like to stay here better.”

Chloe could hear their joyous feet and ringing voices as they went down the hill towards the school-house.

“Dear children!” she thought: “may God spare them trials like mine!”

P

XXIV.

AFFLICTIONS.

MORE troubles were in store for the parents. Chloe was again brought very near the steep edges of the grave. Said the doctor to her, "I have known for weeks that you would have this trouble to pass through. I wish I could relieve you; but I can do nothing but pray for you. That is all I can do, Chloe."

When her condition was made known, people came to her from all parts of the town; for Chloe had many friends. There were some to whom she had given love and sympathy in times of affliction and trial; and to those her death would be a sad loss. There were others whose friendship had been won by the beauty and harmony of her daily life; and such would grieve that one like her must pass away. Many, too, there were whose hearts were

bound to her's by a stronger bond, a holier tie,—the tie of Christian union, the bond of mutual love towards our Saviour—the Lord Jesus Christ. Many regretful tears were shed there in her little room. Many fervent prayers were offered, and many a sad farewell was spoken by those who expected to meet Chloe upon earth never again. The little children came in and stood around her bed, their young faces shaded by a quiet sorrow. To each Chloe gave a parting kiss and commended them to Jesus.

Yet she was very happy. There was peace and quiet within her heart. All was given up. Her dearest friends, her pleasant loves and friendships, and every thing that had given life its sweetness, were yielded and given up. Above all shone that blessed rest that would be her's,—pure, heavenly and eternal; and to leave this life of suffering for that would indeed be joyful. There was but one regretful thought mingled with her view of dying; and it was this:—she must leave her father and mother

alone; and the parting with them would be sadder than death or the grave. The parents' hearts were filled with the keenest anguish. The mother was ill and prostrated by sorrow and weeping; and the father, choked by silent grief, could only walk from mother to child, and from child to mother, in his deep sorrow.

Chloe knew what they were suffering for her. She felt how lonely, comfortless and unprotected they would be in their old age without her to care for them; and a strong desire to *live* arose in her heart. For their sakes she was willing to take up again the burdens of her life and bear them on through still more years of increasing pain and sorrow. "O God," she earnestly prayed, "spare my life if it is thy holy will,—not for my own sake, but their's." Her prayer was answered, and she lived to carry her aged parents through scenes of sickness, poverty and trial. But she had been so near the grave that her restoration was as if one was raised from the dead. People flocked to her with smiles and

congratulations, and living seemed more pleasant than ever before. To her, all things were new. The flowers which the children brought in possessed beauties that she never before had seen. The music of the birds had sweeter cadences than she ever had heard, and the gladness that comes with summer's beauty was to her deeper and fuller.

The parents, in their joy that Chloe was spared to them, prized her more tenderly than ever. The father at length became able to work a little again at his shoemaking. Chloe made and sold her beautiful things; and perhaps never before were the three more quietly happy together than then. Thus a whole year passed away, and all the time light was in the humble home upon the hill-side.

But it could not always last. Another spring came around; the mother scattered flower-seeds in newly-made beds and the father ploughed and planted his garden as usual. Soon after it was finished, he was laid upon a sick-bed, and at length, by disease and

weakness, was brought very near the grave. As time passed, the mother became worn by care and trouble; and at length she was prostrated also. Then came a scene of trial for Chloe. All the care and oversight of their medicines devolved upon her. During many long, sleepless nights, she patiently and silently bore her own terrible pain, now aggravated by care and anxiety, all the while lifting up with her cheerfulness the sinking hearts of her suffering parents. For her own support she went to God; and the Arm of Strength that never yet had failed her was around her then. Almost hourly she prayed for strength and grace to carry her through this time of trouble, and for resignation to the sad partings that seemed so near.

But the darkest night will have an end; and this, perhaps, was only sent to add another test to her long-tried faith. The mother became able to walk around again, and the father was pronounced out of danger and was gaining

slowly. They were alone one Sabbath morning, and he said to his wife,—

“If you can take my chair into Chloe’s room, we will have prayer. I have felt anxious, since I could sit up some, to pray with you as I used to; but I wanted to be alone with you and Chloe.”

They went into her room, and the father read a chapter in the Bible. Then, still sitting in the old arm-chair, he prayed; and with that tremulously-spoken prayer the three hearts went up to God together in sweet accord, and the burden of the offering was this: resignation to all their trials, and thankfulness for the good they had brought to them.

The parents were broken by this long, trying sickness, and now were failing fast with age. The entire care of obtaining things necessary for family use fell upon Chloe; and her oversight extended even to the making and mending of her parents’ clothes. Yet, amidst so many engrossing anxieties, she lost nothing from her youthful-like freshness of heart. Her

sympathy with friends, her love for the beautiful and her exquisite taste were ardent and glowing as ever.

About this time she commenced the making of a new, large box, for which she had been saving nice pictures and papers that had been brought to her by numerous visitors and friends. The idea of it had for a long time been growing in her own mind, until now it was matured. All the artistic harmonies of colour, and all the exquisite little inner arrangements, were in their beauty planned and pictured there, and her efficient fingers were itching to bring the idea into life. During her wearisome, sleepless nights she thought of it, and during the days she worked slowly, but with joyful success. The box was becoming more beautiful than even she had thought. Her father would sometimes stand by her bedside to see her work, and would say,—

“When do you expect to get this done, Chloe?”

"Oh, I don't know; but I guess in two years, if I live."

"Well," he would say, "I don't know how you can have patience to make all those little things and put so much work upon them."

"It does require patience, father; but I love to do it."

But she was interrupted in her pleasant labour. One morning, the first day of December, the mother was taken seriously ill.

"I wonder what ails me?" she said. "It is something new. I never was so before. I cannot breathe."

The doctor was called and pronounced it heart-disease, from which it was probable she never would recover. Then followed a long and terrible sickness, during which the mother passed near the open gate of death, and another scene of trial for Chloe, with her care of the medicines, the comforting and sustaining of her father and the bearing of her own aggravated suffering. But her mother

was raised once more from her sick-bed, although gaining so slowly that the gentle spring-time came before she could again walk around. Then came another affliction. Mr. Yale, who for more than forty years had been among them, was taken away by death. His loss was deeply felt by the many to whom he long had been a faithful friend and pastor; but none mourned more sincerely than Chloe and her aged parents. No more would they see his face; never again would their hearts be cheered by his comforting words; and to them his death was a loss indeed.

“We old folks are passing away,” said the mother. “I shall soon follow him.”

About the first of June, Chloe began again to work upon the box, which had been set away for so long a time. The mother would pick the flowers that bloomed in the yard and bring them to her, saying, “I did not think that I should be here this summer to bring flowers to you.” Then, sitting down to watch the progress of the box, she would add, “Well,

I don't expect to live to see this finished. You never will get it done if you take so much pains and put so much work upon it."

"Oh, yes, mother," Chloe often said. "Patience and perseverance accomplish great things. I am not at all discouraged."

The mother continued very feeble, and in future a woman must be paid to do the necessary housework. How was it to be done? Night after night Chloe revolved the question in her own mind. She thought over their limited means,—how she could retrench here and economize there. She feared that they must call upon the town for aid. It was something from which every part of her sensitive nature shrunk,—a trial, she thought, that she could not meet. And she was not to meet it then. God provided another way. She had more company than ever before. Numerous strangers and visitors came to see her, each one leaving some substantial token of regard; and thus she was enabled to meet every neces-

sary expense. So the summer passed away, quietly and happily; but, when the winter came, poverty again stared them in the face. Even then God raised them up friends. A concert was given at the village near, and, a short time afterwards, the clergyman, with the singers, went to spend a pleasant hour in Chloe's room. For her pleasure, they sang again the songs of the concert; and when they went away, the proceeds of it, amounting to thirty-one dollars, were placed in her hand. Thus their pressing wants were supplied, and Chloe's wintry hours made blooming as the summer. Another spring and summer came, but with it no lifting up of the weight of Chloe's burdens. The parents were now eighty years old both feeble, broken and unable to work. Their expenses were increasing, their means decreasing. The trial so long dreaded was coming; and Chloe must prepare herself to meet it, and still with hope and cheerfulness sustain the sinking hearts of her parents.

The three were talking together in Chloe's room one day, and she said,—

“I think we could get along if we had not hired help to pay. I don't see any other way but to call upon the town for that.”

Said the father, “I always worked hard to try to lay up something for our old age,—and might, if we had not had so much sickness, and so much expense to pay.”

“Oh,” said the mother, weeping, “the bread of dependence is bitter.”

“Mother,” said Chloe, cheerfully, while her voice trembled and the tears came as she spoke, “think how good God has been to us. We should have had this trial before, if he had not raised up so many kind friends for us.”

Day after day passed away before Chloe could summon courage to do what she knew must be done. At length, forced by necessity, she sent for one of the town-officers and told him the story of their privation.

“Why, Chloe,” he said, cheerfully, “we are

willing to pay your help. We expected to do it before, and have only wondered how you have done so long as you have."

Chloe's trembling, sinking heart was cheered by his kindly words; but the trial of *dependence* was not removed. It still rested heavily there.

XXV.

SWEET AND BITTER.

THE box was completed. To it Chloe had given an extra finish here and the last touch there. It was just right. Every leaf, bud and flowret of the outward adorning hung and drooped naturally and gracefully, and all the beautiful wonders of the inside were in their right places. As she looked upon it now, admiringly and lovingly, her thoughts went back over the two years that had gone since its beginning. During that time had come some of the weightiest burdens of her life. Looking back, she could see where her pathway had been and through what a wilderness of sorrows, cares and anxieties she had been led. She remembered now all the trembling and fearing in the darkness, all the doubting

and distrusting of the way, crowned at last by the clear up-looking of a triumphant faith. She remembered, too, how the idea of the box had lived in her mind, all the time shedding the light of its beauty there. She thought how, as she worked on, it had grown in fullness, until now it stood perfect in its proportions and complete in its beauty and harmony. No wonder that she shed tears over it. It had been her constant companion through times of trouble and was to her like a true and sympathizing friend. The parents came in to look at it. Said the mother, "I have lived to see this finished. I didn't expect to."

"Well, Chloe," said the father, "you'll never get your pay for all that work."

The box was set away,—Chloe glad, yet almost regretting, that it was really done. She already missed the exciting pleasure of the planning and making.

But another pleasure, that she had not expected, was in store for her. The window that had been made back of the bed looked out

directly upon a wood-house that the father had put there long years before. It had become old and decayed, and, from necessity, was taken away. Now, looking out, Chloe could see what she had not seen for more than twenty years. The road, as it wound up the hill and curved around the house upon its summit. The old house itself, with its quaintly-sloping roof; its slender-posted piazza and monumental poplars in front. The green fields which her little bare feet had so often trod in childhood; and, farther in the distance, the chestnut-trees, every one of which she knew so well. The old road looked just the same; and so did the large stones in the fields. The house had grown browner and older, and even the tall, straight poplars seemed to Chloe to have taken the same look of decay. There were little shrubs and bushes that she did not remember; and some trees that were single-boughed when she was young were now full of sheltering leaves for the birds that loved to make their nests among them. But the same

spirit of beauty was there, the same sweet freshness and the same glad blue sky over all. Chloe watched it all from out the little square window; and, as she watched, she wept. Her very heart rained tears; for the careless joy of the child stood out for the time in strong, bold relief against the care-prisoned heart of the woman. This feeling at length passed away and gave place to the beautiful memories that came thronging around her; and she awoke to a consciousness of how much her happy childhood had been to her after-years. Olden associations had lived upon her days of suffering like gentle wild flowers that spring up and grow of their own sweet will, and had filled her life with their beauty and fragrance.

But from all this she must turn away to meet again the stern realities around her. Two more long times of terrible illness, produced by heart-disease, had so reduced the mother's strength that she was now tottering upon the brink of the grave.

"My strength is almost gone, Chloe," she would say: "I cannot sow any more flowers

for you. I can't make things pleasant for you as I used to."

The father, worn with age and grief, was following close upon her footsteps, and Chloe felt that her parents were rapidly passing away. Their age and infirmities only made them dearer to her, and most tenderly she cherished them, knowing that each morning sun brought them still nearer the time of the sad, sad parting.

It had always been the wish of her heart that their last days should be most joyful of all. She was thankful that she was spared to care for them, and her only thought was how to make them comfortable and happy. But every side of her way was hedged with difficulties. In her mother, the feeble breath of life was mostly sustained by the doctor's potions; and her own sufferings demanded still more expensive medicines. These must be had and must be paid for; and for this she laid by the few dollars, barely sufficient for the purpose, that had been given in charity. Now

provision must be obtained. The little they had was used prudently as possible, and Chloe worked most diligently upon pincushions and needle-books. But "hard times" came on, when even their best and kindest friends could give but little, and the few meagre sums she received for her work fell very far short of the demand. The parents suffered for even the necessaries of life, and real poverty, with all its bitterness of trial, was crushing them 'neath its iron feet. What should she do? What could she do? The town was already bearing so much expense for them that she had neither heart nor face to look there for help. But there was nowhere else to look. "I can starve, myself," she thought; "but I cannot endure to see them suffer. I shall have to do it."

Still she put it off, hoping that relief would come from some other source.

One day, the parents were in Chloe's room, sitting side by side in their arm-chairs. For a long time all three were silent; and at length Chloe, looking up, saw that both had fallen

asleep, and a tear was still trembling upon the mother's withered eyelid. She laid down her work and gazed upon their faces. Furrowed, seamed and wrinkled they were; and, amid the furrows, seams and wrinkles, poverty and need were tracing their lines.

"I am wrong," thought Chloe, suddenly. "I will not put it off any longer. God has sent this to bring down my pride."

She took out pencil and paper; and, as she did so, her mother awoke.

"What are you going to do, Chloe?" she asked.

"I am going to write to the selectman," she said. "I can't put it off any longer."

The mother hid her face in her hands and burst into tears. Said she, "Your father and I, when we began life together, didn't think that we should ever come to this. Oh! the bread of dependence! it is bitter, bitter!"

With a nerveless hand, Chloe threw aside pencil and paper. She could not write it then. Days of anxiety and want passed by, and at

length the long-dreaded missive was written and sent. It was promptly answered. Provision came to supply their hungry wants; but it was the bread of *dependence*, and it was bitter, *bitter!*

XXVI.

A VISIT TO CHLOE.

THUS far have we followed Chloe through her life-history; and now let us together wend our way over the solitary road to her little room. It is an early June morning, and we will have a pleasant ride up the long and far-looking hills, through the winding, shaded forests and by the wide-spread fields and meadows. We see a thickly-grown orchard, and near it a school-house, with the door and windows boarded up, long ago forsaken by children's feet and ringing voices. As we ride on, we pass now and then a neat-looking farmhouse, with the usual surroundings of sheds and barns. A slight turn of the road brings us in sight of the piazzaed house on the hill. We look at it eagerly; but there is no sign of life within or around. No smoke issues from

the chimney, and the roof that slopes down over the piazza has fallen in. The old house is ruined and deserted. But the landscape of valley and hill that meets the eye is spread out as gloriously as of old. We wish to rest a while and gaze upon it.

Nearest are the pine-crowned hills; and, in the beautiful stillness of the morning, we fancy that we can hear the sad, sweet music of the wind as it moans among those deep and sombre shadows. Beyond are other hills, yet radiant and glistening with the dews of the morning, and sloping down into low valleys; and still other hills, rising upon hills, far, far away, until they are lost in the dimness of the distant horizon. As we gaze, a shadow passes over the scene; but it is followed by a brighter sunlight. The shadow comes again, then the light; and so they chase each other, ever changing, ever varying. But we turn away at length, and pass on around the curved road and drive rapidly down the hill. Before we reach the foot, we stop at a low-browed home

by the wayside. We go up the pathway and enter the humble kitchen. The cooking-stove is in its accustomed place, and so is the long, old-fashioned clock and the shelf whereon the family Bible has rested so many years. We look around for the shoemaker's bench in the corner. It is not there. Where is the father? Where is the mother? We see no one but "Mary," the tidy, honest-looking Irishwoman, and a white kitten that is playing around our feet.

We go on and enter the little bedroom. Its walls are neatly papered, and several small pictures are hanging upon them. A rag carpet covers the floor, and the shelves around the bed are laden with neat boxes and pretty ornaments. Chloe lies upon the bed. We know that she was young when first she was placed there. Twenty-five years have passed away, and Chloe is young no longer. But time rests lightly upon the face that reflects a happy, contented heart. Her brow is still smooth, her eyes are black as ever, and there

is no gray mingled with the dark of her hair. She has never been out of doors since the day she was carried out by Dr. Moody. She never has left the little bedroom since her few weeks' stay in the old room where her sisters died. Her disease has steadily increased with the years, and she has constantly suffered excruciating pain. Still she greets us with a cheerful smile, and her face brightens as we draw chairs around her bed for a social talk. We find her the very same Chloe. The years of trial have taken nothing away from the unassuming sweetness of her character. They have only added to its depth.

We ask at length after the parents. Her face saddens, and she replies, mournfully, "They are both gone: I am all alone now. Mother died a little more than a year ago, when she was eighty-two years old. The last time I ever saw her alive was the day before she was taken down. She was in my room a great deal during the day, but that night about three o'clock she was taken sick. I

didn't sleep any more, for she didn't know any thing, and I saw how sick she was going to be, and I thought perhaps the time had come that she would die. She suffered every thing for eleven days. She was on the bed in the next room, close to my door, where I could hear every thing; and I had the care of the medicine all the time. How glad I was that I was so near her! Every word she said I treasured up in my heart; for I knew they were the last I should ever hear from the lips of my dying mother. She said 'she could leave us in the hands of God, and that our parting would be only for a little while.' The night before she died, oh, what a night that was! The watcher we expected did not come. Mary was sick and went to bed, and father and I were all alone. The poor old man sat by her bedside all night, and I told him what to do. He came to me just like a child to a mother. About twelve o'clock he came in and said, 'Your mother don't know any thing, and I am afraid she never will know

any more. What can I do?' I fixed something for her, but she couldn't swallow it. Father seemed lost and bewildered, and trembled so that he could hardly stand. I said, 'Won't you sit down here a minute, father? I will give you something to make you feel better.' 'No,' he said: 'I must stay by your mother.' I heard him sit down in the chair by her bed, and then I did not hear him move or speak to her at all. I could hear nothing but her heavy breathing. I feared that he had fainted, and I called to him; but there was no answer. The house seemed like a tomb: it was still as death, except her heavy breathing. I called again and again before I could rouse him. Then he came in to me; but he was so feeble and trembling! It seemed as if his strength was almost gone. Oh, what a night it was! No one can know its sorrows. I prayed that God would support us; and it was his sustaining grace that carried us through. His arm was under me and kept me from sinking. Passages of Scripture came to my mind, and

they were balm to my wounded heart. All night I felt strong confidence in God. I could say from my heart, 'Thy will be done.' The next night we had a good watcher, and towards morning I fell asleep. It was the first I had slept for two or three nights, and she died while I was sleeping. Oh, that moment when they told me she was gone! No words can describe it. Father was asleep too, for the poor man was all worn out. I told them not to disturb him, but, when they heard him getting up, to go in and tell him; and so they did. He came out and went to the bed and looked upon her, and then came right in to me. We didn't either of us speak a word, and he sat here all the time they were laying her out. The funeral sermon was preached here in the house; and then they brought the coffin in and set it down here by my bed, where she had stood so many times. I tried to be as composed as I could, and she looked so pleasant and natural! I laid my hand on her forehead and took my last leave of that dear, tender

mother. They carried her right from my room to the graveyard. I raised myself up on my elbow and looked out of the window to see them go up the hill. It was in the month of December; and the last time I ever saw my sisters' graves was in the same month. I watched them till they were out of sight, and then I was clear overcome. My dear, tender mother was gone,—the best friend I had in the world; and I never should see her again. I cannot describe my feelings; no one can ever know how I felt. As soon as father came back from the funeral, he came right in to me and sat down, and after that how I clung to my father! He was all the earthly comfort I had, and we were all the world to each other."

"How long did he live after that?" we asked.

"Oh, only three months. Poor father's heart was broken with sorrow, and he failed very fast after mother died; but he was just as quiet and contented. Mary used to often

say, 'Why, he's the quietest man in all the world!' and he was so good and kind! We were all the world to each other after mother died, and he was the greatest earthly comfort I had. He used to stay in my room all the time when there wasn't company in. He had a shock of a fit, and after that he became very feeble. He couldn't do any thing but read aloud to me. He read to me the very afternoon before he was taken. It was Friday, and a bitter cold night, and Mary went to bed a little after nine; but it was so cold, father said he had rather sit up by the stove a while. So he sat up and talked with me until it was half-past ten. Then I said to him, 'It's half-past ten, father: hadn't you better go to bed?' He spoke so mournful, and said, 'Well, I suppose I must.' He got up and went out, but very soon I heard his hand on my door, trying to find the latch. He came in, and I saw something was the matter with him; as soon as he was taken he wanted to get right in to me, you know. I said, 'Get to the chair,

father; get to the chair if you can!' He tried to get to the chair, but I thought he'd fall before he could get to it,—poor man! As soon as he dropped into the chair, he reached out his hand towards me and tried to speak, and then his hand dropped and he was senseless. I called Mary up; but she didn't know what to do, she was so frightened. I told her to keep him in the chair, and she did as long as she could, but just at eleven o'clock he fell out on the floor and the chair turned over him. Oh, how I felt then nobody can know! Mary was so timid and frightened she did not dare to go out in the dark night to call the neighbours; all I could say, I could not make her go, but she tried to do every thing that I told her for him. It was a fit of apoplexy, and he began to roll around on the floor. He would turn over on his face, and then the cramps would draw him up. Oh, how dreadful it was! I raised myself up on my elbow and watched every motion. I kept my eyes on him every moment all night long, and told Mary what to

do; and she tried to do all she could. I spoke to him a great many times. I would call 'father' so loud! How many times I called his name! But he didn't know any thing: he was entirely senseless. Oh, what agony I endured! I cannot tell you: no one can ever know. Passages of Scripture came to my mind:—'Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee.' 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.' And I was wonderfully supported. I was blessed with calmness and presence of mind, and knew just what I wanted to have done for him, but all the time in such an agony of sorrow and anxiety for my dear father. After a while he opened his eyes, and then dropped asleep just a few moments. Then he opened his eyes again, and I said to him, 'Father, you are very sick, a'n't you?' He looked at me so earnest and tried to speak; but he couldn't. Then I said, 'Father, do you know me? Do you know that it's Chloe talking to you?' Oh, how he looked at me then!—so

earnest, so wistful and so tender! I never, *never* can forget that look. Then he tried to move around to reach my bed. At last he could put his hand on the bed, and I took hold of it. He pressed my hand tight, but could not speak. Then I said again, 'Father, do you know me?' He pressed my hand again, and tried to speak; but he couldn't. I watched the clock and watched it; for it seemed as if daylight never would come. For eight hours he had lain right before my eyes; but how glad I was that he was in here! About six o'clock Mary went to the neighbours, and the men came and carried him to his own bed. I watched him while they were taking him out; for I never expected to see him alive again.

"He died Sunday night. The man that watched with him came to my door about twelve o'clock and said, 'Chloe, your father's gone!' Oh, what a chill went to my heart then, and such a feeling of dreadful loneliness! I can never describe it. Then this text came fresh to my mind:—'When my father

and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.' The neighbours were very kind. If they had been his own sons and daughters they could not have done more. The funeral wasn't till Wednesday. They brought the coffin in for me to take the last look; and I gazed upon him. It seemed as if I could not have the lid shut down. When they shut it down, I was completely overcome. I could not speak. I could not even look out of the window to see them go up the hill. They carried him away, and the house was still and solemn as death. No one can know my loneliness. I had lived to see the last one go, and here I was left on this bed, *all, all alone*. My feelings were beyond description."

She pauses, and there is silence in the little bedroom for a few moments. With tear-filled eyes we have listened to her recital, and we ask, "How are you so cheerful, Chloe?"

"Oh," she replies, "I have a great many sad days: I cannot help it. When I remember how happy we used to be together, and then

think how I am all alone now, it comes over me like an ocean. I never was separated from them a week in my life, until they were removed by death; and now there is not an hour of the day but what I am thinking of them. I was praying for years that I might be prepared to part with my father and mother; and now, when I look back, I can see how He did prepare me for it. I never had the feeling that I should die and leave them alone, but that they would go and leave me. But they were spared to me a long time; and I am so thankful for it! Father and mother lived together sixty years. They were nearly the same age; and both lived to be eighty-two years old. I have always been so thankful that I was blessed with pious parents! I cannot remember a day, when father was able to sit up, that he did not read in his Bible; and he went to meeting every Sabbath, until he became so feeble he couldn't go. I can remember how he used to read in the Bible, Sundays when he couldn't go to church,—just how low

and trembling his voice would sound when he began. Then it seemed as if he was made stronger by what he read, and his voice would sound natural again."

"How have you got along since their death?" we ask.

"Oh, the town have paid Mary's wages and have furnished wood. The other things I have tried to get myself. Sometimes it has looked very dark, and I could not have got along if I had not had so much given me. The people all around have been very kind, and I have a great many blessings. God has supported me through every trial. What should I do if I did not trust in him?"

"Truly," we think, "poor Chloe! what could you do if you did not trust in him?"

"I've often felt," she continues, "that while he afflicted me with one hand he upheld and supported me with the other; and in my deepest affliction I have never seen the moment when I didn't think that I had more comforts and blessings than afflictions and trials. I

have this nice little room, with these pleasant windows to look out of, and so many pleasant things to see. That walnut-tree there, in the plain across the meadow,—I like to watch it in the spring, when the leaves first begin to come; and then in the summer it looks so beautiful to me. In the fall I can see the little squirrels run up and down after nuts. It is so pleasant to see such little creatures have their liberty; and I think what a beautiful world this is, although I can see but a little speck of it out of my windows here. Then I have the use of my eyes and my hands, with these shelves and cupboards so convenient, where I can reach my things myself. Then I have so many kind friends; and that is such a comfort to me! The little children bring me flowers and fruits; and it is so pleasant to have them to love! The ministers in the parishes all around, of all denominations, have been such good friends to me! They have done a great deal, and have influenced others to do for me. Some of my happiest hours have

been when they come and talk with me of the things of Christ. My mind would be carried above all my sorrows and trials and I would feel encouraged and strengthened in faith. But now sometimes I think that I am almost at home. I've lived to carry my father and mother through, and am left all alone, and I don't know what I have to live for now."

"Do you long for death, Chloe?" we ask.

"Oh, no," she replies, with a smile. *x* "Life is sweet to me yet. Still, I like to think of the blessed rest which I hope will be mine. I like to think of the time when I shall be free from all trouble and all pain. What a happy change, to go away from constant pain to perfect joy and happiness! When I get to heaven, I shall not regret that I have gone through all these trials and sufferings. They will seem as nothing then. Happiness will be sweeter for having gone through so much suffering here. I would not give up this sweet peace of mind and the calm trust I feel for health, wealth or all the pleasures of the world. My peace

is like a river. I am willing to leave all in the hands of my heavenly Father. I can trust him for what is to come, feeling sure that he will support and provide for me and will give me grace and patience to bear all that he lays upon me. I am so thankful that I can see the providence of God in all his dealings with me, and that I can see it all for my good; for, if I did not see it so, how could I have borne it all?"

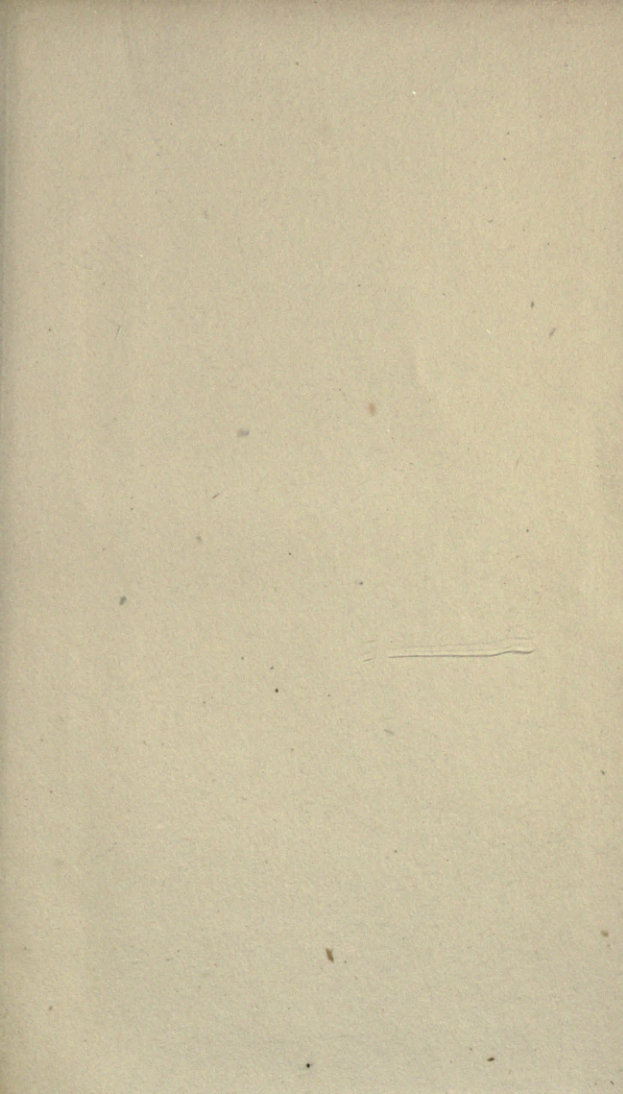
The clock strikes twelve. We hear the pattering of little feet in the kitchen, and in come a troop of school-children. They have bright, happy faces, and our hearts bless them,—the darlings! We must take our leave. But first Chloe will exhibit to us the wonderful box which was two years in the making; and our eyes open wide with wonder that frail human hands can make things so beautiful and exquisite. Then we buy a tiny pin-cushion of her own ingenious designing, and reluctantly arise to go. She presses our hands at parting, and hopes that "the God who has supported her

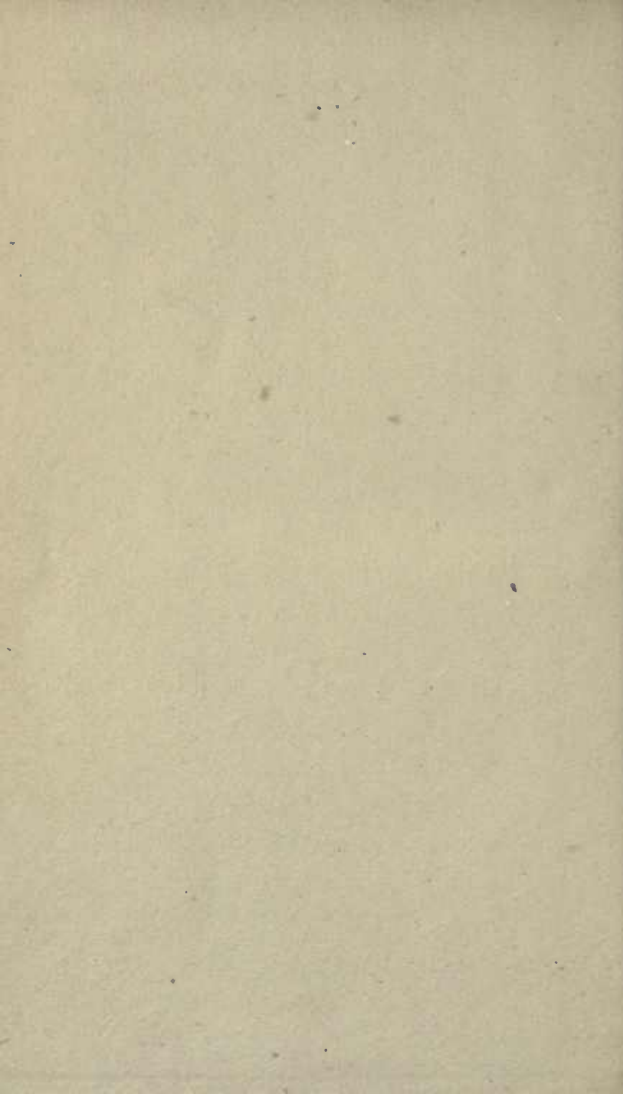
through every trial will guide and bless us through all our life." With tear-filled eyes, we respond, "Amen," and, with Chloe's parting benediction upon us, we go out again into the summer sunshine. We ride slowly up the hill, around the curved road; and as we look off once more upon the landscape we see the sunshine and shadow passing over it still. We drive on down the long hills, through the old woods, to our home in the valley, where all the long day a gentle river murmurs its beautiful song and merry birds and waving, whispering trees make glad the sunny hours.

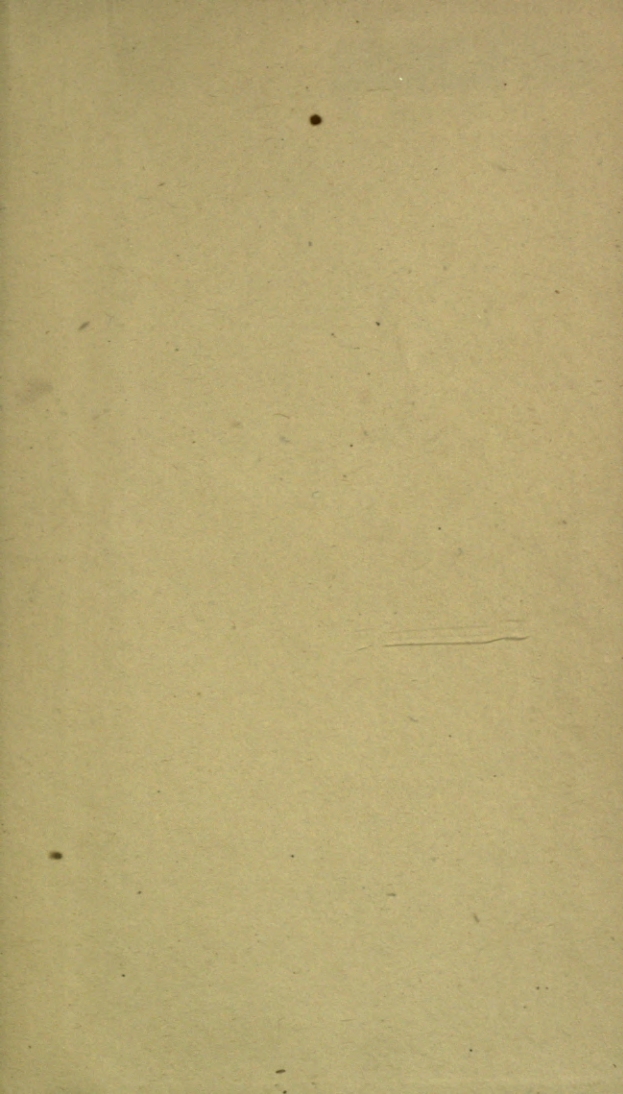
But, in the midst of the beautiful surroundings, our thoughts will go back over that wild and lonely road. We see again the hill, meadow and forest, the ruined old house, and the beautiful, far-away landscape, and wonder if the sun and the clouds are flitting over it still. Then we think of Chloe, with her earnestness of face and purity of heart. We see her weary with the burden of her suffering life, yet loving and joyful, patient and trusting,—

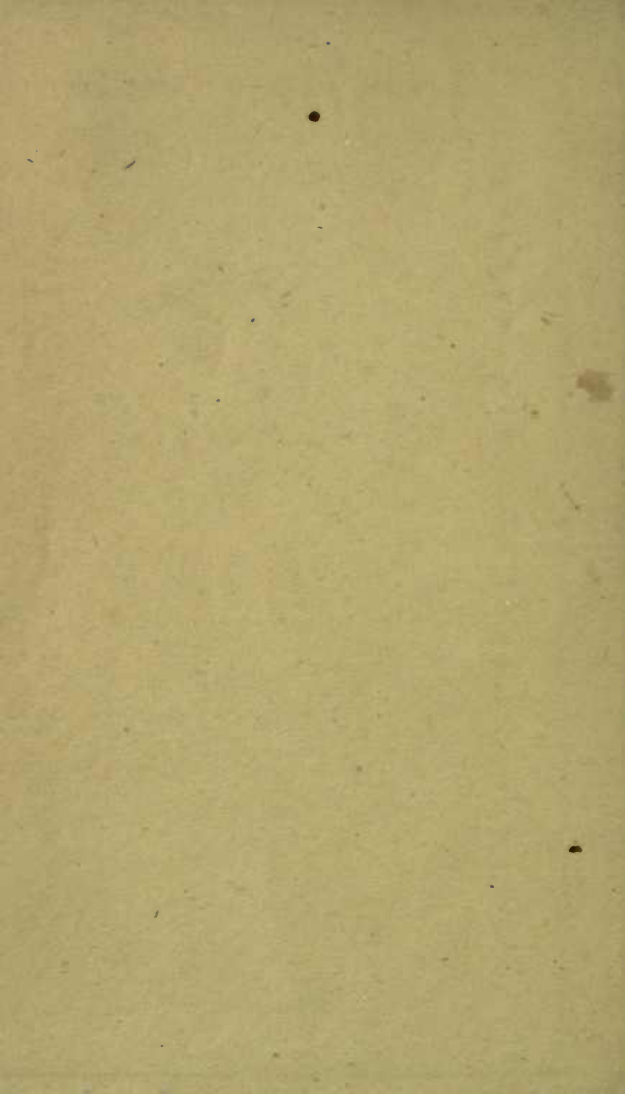
the path for her feet often darkened by the clouds that gather thickly around, but her face brightening in the rays of the light that glows beyond. And thus we leave her. Upon her bed in the little bedroom of an old brown cottage among the Litchfield county hills, Chloe lies patiently suffering. The days come in their brightness, the nights close wearily around, and still she lies patiently suffering. Truly and earnestly hath she wrought her work here; and now, with face turned heavenward, looking forward to the better and more beautiful life, Chloe waits, prays and trusts.

THE END.









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